

# THE ONE PARTY STATE AND DEMOCRACY



## The Zimbabwe Debate

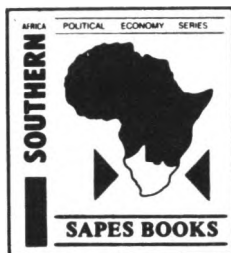
Editors: Ibbo Mandaza and Lloyd Sachikonye

# **THE ONE-PARTY STATE AND DEMOCRACY THE ZIMBABWE DEBATE**

EDITORS

IBBO MANDAZA

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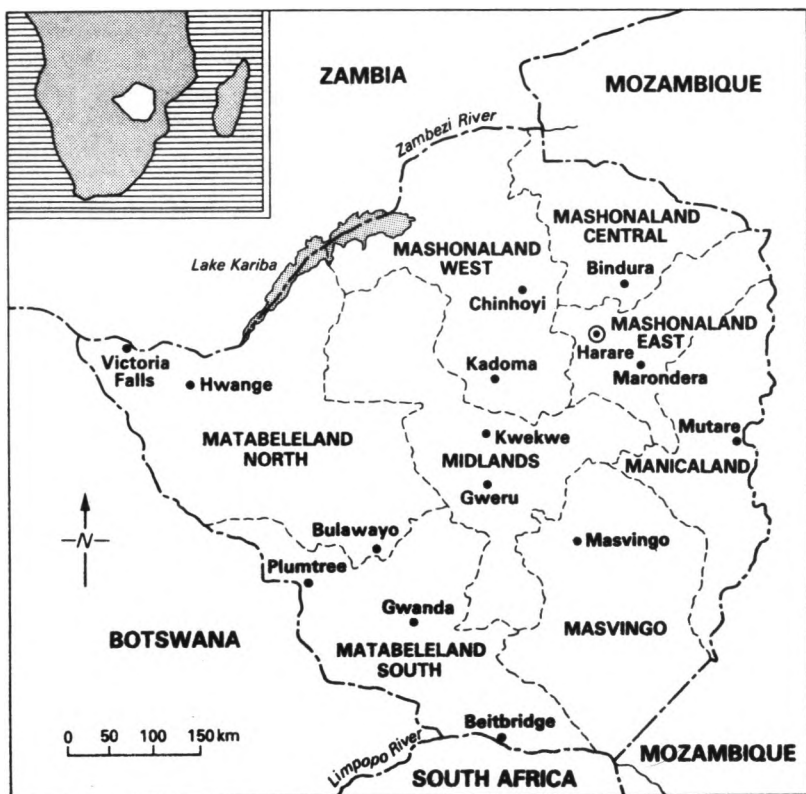


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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAPS	African Association of Political Science
ANC	African National Congress
CAZ	Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation
CZI	Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries
DDF	District Development Fund
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MIGA	Multilateral Guarantee Agency
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NFAZ	National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe
OGIL	Open General Import Licence
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde
RENAMO	Mozambique National Resistance Movement
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAPEM	Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly
SAPEs	Southern Africa Political Economy Series
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
UANC	United African National Council
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UNITA	Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNIP	United National Independence Party
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union — Patriotic Front
ZANU (Ndonga)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Ndonga)
PF-ZAPU	Patriotic Front — Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe Active Peoples Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement

# Map of Zimbabwe



**Map 1** Zimbabwe: provincial boundaries and major towns

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Of course, none of the above — except the editors and the individual authors — bear any responsibility for any shortcomings of this book.

**Ibbo Mandaza**  
**Lloyd M. Sachikonye**  
Harare  
January, 1991

## INTRODUCTION

# THE ZIMBABWE DEBATE ON THE ONE-PARTY STATE AND DEMOCRACY

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Ibbo Mandaza and Lloyd M. Sachikonye

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This book seeks to capture a debate that engaged Zimbabwean society during what will no doubt turn out to be an important phase in the country's post-colonial history. To what extent that larger debate — of which this book is only in part a reflection — contributed to what appears, at least for the interim, to be a decision against a *de jure* one-party state in Zimbabwe is still unclear. Indeed, most of the contributions herein were completed in mid-1990 before President Mugabe's government decided in late September 1990 that it would not legislate for the establishment of a one-party state. Some of these contributors believed that the introduction of a *de jure* one-party state was inevitable; others saw such an outcome as following on a resolution which ZANU-PF had already made during the liberation struggle. But it is our view that the nature of the debate that this issue of the *one-party state* provoked in *civil society*, the intensity with which intellectuals and other informed groups took it up, and the extent to which all this will have impinged on both President Mugabe and his colleagues in the Cabinet and Central Committee — all will have contributed to that outcome. Some analysts will attach some significance to the fact that President Mugabe made the "first public comment on Saturday's [22nd September, 1990] decision of the ZANU-PF Central Committee"<sup>1</sup> against a *de jure* one-party state abroad (in Toronto, Canada on 27th September and later on 2nd October in New York),<sup>2</sup> and not in Zimbabwe itself. Others might even suggest that this reflects unfavourably on a state that appears to be more responsive to the Western pressures against the *one-party state* idea than to its own people.<sup>3</sup> (Yet the post-colonial state is essentially so *dependent* that it cannot but be responsive to such *external* pressures. But this does not mean that it is oblivious of *internal* pressures, particularly from various sections of the petty bourgeoisie.)

Besides, there was some confusion as some members of the Politburo continued to state, even on the day after the said meeting of the Central Committee, that the one-party state objective was to be upheld.<sup>4</sup> And on the very day that President Mugabe was announcing the said decision of

the Central Committee in Toronto, the former President of Zimbabwe, Rev. Canaan Banana, stated publicly:

I argue for the retention of the *status quo* because I believe that no generation has the right to make immutable decisions for future generations, which is that a *de jure* one-party state does. But here I stop to ask: Just what do we stand to lose if we simply abandoned the one-party slogan!?'<sup>5</sup>

Whether Rev. Banana was better informed (by *the* reliable source) for the occasion than those members of the Politburo who continued with "the One-Party Slogan" should be left to speculation. But beyond the confusion and apparent equivocation within and among the leaders of the country, emerged in due course the position which President Mugabe announced in Toronto and New York. As analysts, we have some justification in concluding that the decision itself was an outcome of an intense debate that gripped the country ever since the ZANU-PF Congress of 1989. The 1990 General Election results were in many respects an expression against the *one-party state* idea; 50% of those (50% of the electorate) who voted against ZANU-PF could not be ignored. As stated in Mandaza's chapter herein, wise leaders are those who demonstrate a capacity to respond to the yearnings and promptings of the *civil society*. To some extent, President Mugabe and his colleagues in ZANU-PF were caught in an understandable dilemma. On the one hand, it was necessary to extol and promote the *one-party state* idea as an election campaign tactic designed to beat off an increasingly threatening opposition in the form of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). On the other hand, how, having won the election anyway, to unwind and acknowledge that the *civil society* as a whole was against the *one-party state*. This in part explains why President Mugabe's announcement on the issue retained an apparent contradiction: ZANU-PF has decided to "leave things as they are" but Zimbabwe "was already a *de facto* one-party state".<sup>6</sup> The question is whether such a position is one designed to keep options open, with the possibility of the *one-party state* idea becoming a major campaign issue again for ZANU-PF at the next General Election in 1995. Time will tell. But in the meantime, we present this book as a case study in the interaction that is always inherent in the relationship between *the state* and *civil society*. The *democratic process* itself is about the nature and content of that dialectical relationship. Therefore, it is, perhaps, appropriate to examine some of these key concepts of democracy and one-party state before engaging in the debate itself.

## DEMOCRACY

The literature on the concepts and empirical accounts on democracy, the one-party state and socialism is massive and uneven. It is impossible to

review it within the confines of this introduction. We will relate our elucidation and critique of the concepts to the African experience but more specifically to the Zimbabwean case.

The concept and practice of democracy is customarily traced back to Ancient Greece. The phenomenon of representative government — based on the participation of common citizens in political debate and consultation — characterised democracy in the city-state of Athens. However, it must be stated that this was selective democracy: slaves and some citizens were barred from the democratic process. The early flowering of this selective democracy was submerged in the long history of feudalism, territorial wars in Europe, imperialist annexation of Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Americas by the emergent European industrial and maritime powers, principally Britain, France, Spain and Germany. However, liberal versions of historiography assert that the American Constitution of 1789, the French Revolution of 1789 and the English Reform Act of 1832 were significant landmarks in the development of democracy in the West.

Much of the conceptualisation of democracy today, therefore, borrows extensively from the discourse of the bourgeois revolutions which ushered in the main features of Western democracy with its stress on property rights, individual rights and such rights as those relating to voting, freedom of association and speech amongst others. This discourse has tended to equate the 'democratic model' with a 'free market economy', a capitalist economic system. Although capitalist development in the West was inextricably linked with the bourgeois revolutions, this did not ensure that the new social and political systems put into place were necessarily 'democratic'.

A few examples to illustrate the disjuncture between the workings of the capitalist systems and democratic freedoms will suffice. Even in the cradle of the first bourgeois revolution in England, the right to vote was not extended to all strata until the 20th century. In the United States, the 'democratic model' co-existed, for many years, with a brazen system of economic exploitation: the institution of black slavery. The global power which assigned itself the role of defining what constitutes or does not constitute 'democracy' in other countries did not extend the right to vote to its black population until the 20th century. Even then, it required a massive and long-drawn-out civil rights struggle by blacks to extract basic economic and political rights from the state. In significant ways, the blacks are still a marginalised social group for all the vaunted United States 'democratic' model. McCarthyism in the 1950s, at the height of the Cold



War, severely stripped away the political rights of American socialists and communists.

Similarly, the system of colonialism imposed over much of Asia and Africa and the Caribbean exposed the limitations of the democratic model touted by Western powers. Colonialism entailed the expropriation of land, the forcible extraction of taxes and labour-power and the exclusion of the colonised peoples from the political and decision-making process. Memories of this blot in the recent historical experiences of African countries partly explain the retort of some of its contemporary leaders that Western countries cannot teach them about 'democracy'.<sup>7</sup> They have a point.

It should be stressed that even in the West, the existing democratic rights — the right to vote, to join trade unions and freedom of association and speech — were the culmination of formidable struggles by workers and other social strata over considerable periods of time. Similarly, the struggles for independence in the colonies represented democratic aspirations which colonialism had denied the majority citizens of these territories.

We have shown the limitations of the Western 'democratic model' — notwithstanding its variations. Furthermore, some of the Western powers themselves have not only taken contradictory positions on democracy (for example, *vis-à-vis* colonialism) but have actually buttressed undemocratic and authoritarian regimes. Examples of such regimes would include that of Mobutu in Zaire, Pinochet in Chile and the late Marcos in the Philippines. In those instances, hegemonic ambitions expressed through certain geo-political considerations became the primary motivation for the propping up of such regimes and not any pretensions towards 'a democratic model'. The same motivation led to intervention to unseat democratic and socialist-oriented regimes in such countries as Chile (under Allende), Grenada (under Bishop) amongst others. These interventions had nothing to do with the construction of democracy in these societies but much to do with the hegemonic interests of the United States.

In Africa, the debate on democracy occurs in a context of economic stagnation, political instability, foreign intervention and critical reflection on what thirty years of independence have bequeathed to the continent. The economic and political crises besetting the greater proportion of the continent have been claimed to be the consequence of the absence of democratic systems, or more precisely, of multi-party structures.<sup>8</sup>

True, the international economic environment — dominated as it is by Western capitalist powers — has been characterised by the downswing in prices for raw material exports such as agricultural and mineral

commodities since the 1970s and the upswing in prices for manufactured imports from the West. The oil shocks of the 1970s further compounded the import capacity of many non-oil-producing countries. Finally, the increase in indebtedness and tough conditions for its repayment under structural adjustment programmes has further undermined the capacity of most countries to invest in their economic growth instead of exporting capital as debt repayment.

The African debate on democracy has, therefore, centred on the relationship between democratic process and both development and national unity. One position is that:

there is a definite correlation between the lack of democratic practices in African politics and the deteriorating socio-economic conditions (Anyang Nyong'o, *op. cit.* 19).

Thus, African states have neglected the linkage between politics and economic development by asserting that political order and stability, but not democracy, were the preconditions for economic growth and prosperity. This flawed position was also advocated by such Western social scientists as Huntington and Sklar.<sup>9</sup>

However, the attempt at empirical validation of the correlation between democratic practice and economic growth cannot be said to have been successful nor convincing. The cases of Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire and Malawi as countries where economic growth allegedly provided evidence of the salutary effect of participatory systems have been disputed (Mkandawire, 1989). Recent political developments in the first two countries confirm the shakiness of these empirical examples and, therefore, the argument for correlation.

Generally, the argument by most African leaders that development and national unity should come first before democracy (and by implication, the multi-party system) has been subjected to a penetrating critique. It is an argument that has developed within what has been termed "the ideology of developmentalism" which has also been termed "the ideology of domination".<sup>10</sup> The flaws in the ideology partly explain the failure to attain both political stability and significant economic development in much of the continent.

Some of this more penetrating critique in the African debate on democracy relates to the uncritical espousal of the liberal version of the concept of democracy. There exists the possibility that the debate among African scholars can become an unabashed celebration of liberalism (Shivji, *op. cit.*) It has been further argued that:

most of the time when we talk and discuss democracy we are really referring to individualism (i.e. liberalism, which arose at a particular conjuncture in the history of

the development of the bourgeoisie in the West) rather than the struggle for equality (i.e. democracy, which has appeared in human history in different forms at different conjunctures). Secondly, democracy for most of us, whether we like it or not, is collapsed with the organisation of the state and government structures (Parliament, courts, parties, accountability, elections, etc.) rather than a summation of struggles of the majority (*Ibid.*)

This argument asserts that the question of democracy is the question of the struggle of the popular classes while development, accountability, parties and elections are the symptomatic forms of that struggle (*Ibid.*) The liberal perspective on democracy is reproduced in the Zimbabwe debate and these flaws in this perspective are inevitably subjected to a rigorous critique.<sup>11</sup>

The argument for economic development before the installation of multi-party arrangements is one which is broadly couched within the ideology of developmentalism and whose weaknesses are not difficult to identify. It is also reproduced in the Zimbabwe debate.<sup>12</sup> Finally, an important argument against the liberal bourgeois version of the concept of democracy concerns its relationship to economic emancipation. The objective precondition of a democratic political life is the emergence of 'free' producers, whether peasants, artisans or proletarians.<sup>13</sup> Thus, where direct force is an integral part of production relations, no consistent democracy is possible. One crucial prerequisite for a democratic political life is that direct producers be free of direct constraint, i.e. extra-economic coercion and therefore:

by casting a halo around one single halo — that for a multi-party system, free and fair elections — as the sum and substance of the democratic process, its net effect is to call for a 'democratic opening' so narrow that it would grant meaningful freedom only to rival bourgeois factions, while leaving popular classes beyond its pale (*Ibid.*)

We return briefly to some of these arguments in the section in which we summarise the main positions in the Zimbabwe debate on democracy, the one-party state and socialism.

## THE ONE-PARTY STATE

The debate on democracy in Africa takes places against the background of a groundswell of opposition against the concept and system of the one-party state. We cannot provide an exhaustive account of that groundswell which has caused political eruptions in countries which include, amongst others, Gabon, Kenya, Zambia, Mozambique, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Algeria. This conjunctural process in which mass campaigns for the re-installation of the multi-party system has lent urgency and immediacy to the democracy debate. Hence the tendency to equate the multi-party with the essence of

democracy. This formula (multi-party system = democracy) is, of course, simplistic, if not misleading.

Yet the original case for a one-party state was that it was a superior structure for what was termed "participatory democracy" and for the promotion of "national unity". The leading and articulate exponent of these presumed virtues of the one-party state in Africa was Julius Nyerere of Tanzania in the 1960s. In his critique of this case for a one-party state. Mandaza, in the next chapter, argues:

... all should concede that the Nyererian thesis was as mythical as it was romantic. The impression, that appeared to wash for a while in Tanzania, must be attributed less to any claim of historical validity than to Nyerere's own style of enlightened leadership; and the fact that a Tanzania that was predominantly peasant in character found itself most receptive to the paternalism of a father figure, the Mwalimu!

Overall, the historical record of the past thirty years in Africa has indeed demonstrated that the pursuit of a one-party state has less been a response to the mass demand for freedom and democracy than an attempt "to silence and arrest a democratisation process that began in the struggle for national liberation and seeks a full resolution of the national question" (*Ibid.*).

Yet it took almost thirty years before there emerged a coherent critique of the one-party state and a mass movement for a multi-party system. This would largely be explained by the demobilisation of the various social forces which had initially buttressed the national movement for independence. But what other explanations exist for the adoption of the system and its durability over a whole generation? One position has sought these in the petit-bourgeois basis and character of the nationalist movement leadership itself and the nature of the post-colonial state. Unlike the bourgeoisie in Europe which transformed all political and economic institutions into their own image and thus became social hegemonic

the petit-bourgeoisie in Africa has not creation of its own. It merely inherited colonial institutions with which the mass of the people did not identify, as is evidenced by the struggle for independence. Therefore, the state it represents, unlike the bourgeois state, is not entrenched in society as a whole. It is largely a bureaucratic contrivance.<sup>14</sup>

The scramble for personal accumulation was generally fierce. As a consequence, those fractions of the petit-bourgeoisie which got in first

seek to protect their privileged position by keeping other fractions or parties out. Their inability to convert revenues into productive capital, which is one of the most intriguing aspects of petit-bourgeois rule in Africa, creates an even greater structural predisposition towards fractional rule. Depending on the severity of the situation, the party 'itself' could be reduced to the President and the political circle immediately around him ... (*Ibid.*).

The materialist explanation of the attraction of the one-party state to the ruling petit-bourgeoisie elite is more convincing than reference to the

"unique African mode of resolving differences within one family", "nation-building" and related alibis. In Zimbabwe, the main lines in the one-party state debate have been reproduced.<sup>15</sup> On the material imperatives for the one-party state, there is complete silence. However, the critique of the one-party state position in Zimbabwe also reflects an awareness of a dominant role which material imperatives play in the calculations of the single-party advocates.<sup>16</sup>

In summary, even the original advocate of the one-party concept, Julius Nyerere, now has second thoughts. He no longer propounds the thesis and has admitted that it might have flaws and that the multi-party system may not be a mistaken idea or structure for contemporary Tanzania, and by implication, for Africa. Those who still propound the concept are definitely on the defensive. In the second half of 1990, President Kaunda not only toyed with the idea of a referendum on the one-party state (which has been in existence for 17 years in Zambia), but was forced to abandon both the concept and referendum under tremendous pressure from the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD). Related domestic pressures have influenced decisions to abandon the one-party state model in Mozambique, Angola and Gabon amongst others. It remains to be seen whether similar domestic mass pressures will force such countries such as Kenya and Tanzania to abandon the model.

## SOCIALISM

The debates on democracy and the one-party state in Africa and elsewhere have been lent added significance and immediacy with the collapse of some socialist governments and the one-party state model in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Although no explicit reference in all cases was made to Eastern Europe in order to justify its installation of the one-party state in Africa, it was assumed that the durability of the one-party state model in Eastern Europe demonstrated its feasibility and applicability to Africa. In some circles, socialism was equated with the one-party state model. The multi-party system and related democratic rights were erroneously reduced to 'bourgeois rights'.

It was, therefore, inevitable that the collapse of the model and of some communist governments would generate afresh the debate on the relationship between democracy, socialism and the multi-party system. The collapse severely undermined whatever case was still being argued by the advocates of the one-party state model. The peoples of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in 1989 and 1990 voted with their feet against the



authoritarian one-party state model. A political Pandora's box was opened as new social movements emerged and the parties were founded to contest elections.

However, the debate on socialism in Africa (including Zimbabwe) has tended to be less well-informed and rigorous as that on democracy and the one-party state. This lacuna in analysis is also reflected in the Zimbabwe debate, as contributions to the present volume show. Whatever debate there has been, has tended to be 'dismissive': 'socialism could not work in Eastern Europe, so it cannot work elsewhere, including Africa'. Related to this simplistic reasoning is the claim that socialism could not be a democratic social system for it had been 'guilty' by its long association with the one-party state model. It is an evocative argument after admissions about the undemocratic record of Stalinism and the authoritarianism associated with the one-party state model.

Opponents of socialism have not been slow to exploit the collapse of its political infrastructure and the crisis which beset its economic performance. In Zimbabwe, the critique of socialism has been reduced to a critique of the crisis of the socialist variant of the Eastern Europe model (assuming that it is a variant which had attained homogeneity in all countries in that region, which is arguable.)<sup>17</sup> The calls for the introduction of socialism into Zimbabwe by various mass movements including organised labour (under the auspices of the ZCTU), certain elements within ZANU-PF itself, students and others are simply brushed aside, if not ignored. The original intentions of the nationalist movement to establish a socialist society are also dismissed somewhat cynically.<sup>18</sup> These various interventions — whether they are 'dismissive', 'assertive' or 'cynical' — on socialism in Zimbabwe provide sufficient evidence that the debate on socialism is still quite ambiguous and confused.

However, another position in the debate on socialism in Zimbabwe has acknowledged the expressed intention to transform the society into a socialist one. It is an intention that has consistently been expressed by ZANU-PF over the years but more clearly in the 1970s as the national liberation struggle intensified. Since independence in 1980, ZANU-PF has continued to pronounce its adherence to socialism as an ideology and as its economic objective. However, there clearly exists a disjuncture between the declarations of intent and the actual political and economic programmes implemented. This was a major issue identified in the collaborative work by Zimbabwean scholars on the problematic issue of the political economy of socialist transition (Mandaza, 1986). A combination of factors in the second half of the 1980s has shifted the focus from the urgency of

formulating the modalities of implementing socialism. These factors were both economic and political. Economically, problems arose in relation to access to adequate foreign investment inflows, under-utilisation of capacity due to forex shortage and recurrent droughts. These factors slowed growth and forced the government into making concessions to local and international capital in order to attract foreign capital. These included the adoption of structural adjustment programmes which encapsulated expenditure cuts on certain sectors and services. Whether or not these measures were explicitly directed by the World Bank, they led to the revision of the government's original economic agenda. As the 1980s drew to a close, the calls for the privatisation of certain parastatals and the liberalisation of the economy grew more insistent.

Politically, the ruling ZANU-PF itself was still a mass nationalist movement without a homogeneous ideological position. Strands of socialist and capitalist perspectives co-existed uneasily. Some of the petit-bourgeois leadership frenetically took to personal accumulation. The Sandura Commission disclosures on car sales racketeering provided some evidence of some of the means used. The party leadership could not keep under control such accumulation propensities which were perhaps inevitable. There was no strict adherence to the Leadership Code. The anticipated voluntarism on the part of the leadership proved illusory. Socialist pronouncements began to be greeted with cynicism.

The debate on socialism should move beyond 'cynicism' and 'dismissiveness' in relation to the above economic and political constraints. It should take into its purview the structural context, the balance of social forces, the constraints imposed by the inherited structures and international environment and the on-going social struggles for democratisation in both the political and economic spheres. In the last analysis, it is misleading to assert that socialism is an unworkable social system because it has 'failed' elsewhere; or conversely, that capitalism is the only hope for the future because it has 'succeeded' elsewhere. Thus, the Zimbabwe debate needs to be developed beyond polemics and platitudes.

## THE ORIGINALITY OF THE ZIMBABWE DEBATE

As most chapters to this volume demonstrate, the authors take the Zimbabwean experience as the starting point of their contributions to the debate on democracy, the one-party state and socialism. The specificities of the Zimbabwean political and economic context are drawn out. The discussion centres on concrete issues and rarely remains on the abstract

level. This is one strength of the debate. Where references are made to the international environment or specific cases, this is mainly in order to show how they impinge on the developments in Zimbabwe and on the arguments in the debate. Collectively, the contributions succeed in highlighting the major issues and contradictions in Zimbabwe's post-independence political development.

Moreover, the debate itself is 'home-grown'. This would be a banal observation if it was forgotten that such has been the relationship of intellectual dependency that national debates in Africa have tended to be dominated by intellectuals from outside the continent. In such debates, African scholars have played a very marginal role. This form of intellectual neo-colonialism, as its economic counterpart, often leads to the weakening of the national intellectual base with all the attendant negative consequences this has on national culture (including the education system and research capacity). The significance of the Zimbabwe debate thus goes beyond its immediate purpose as a constructive critique of the Zimbabwe government's position on democracy and the one-party state model. It argues for a space of debate on pertinent national issues, such space as would provide a foundation for a democratic intellectual culture. The debate itself provides evidence of the existence of space for such debate in contemporary Zimbabwe. It needs to be extended but a beginning has been made. Such fora as the African Association of Political Science [AAPS] (Zimbabwe Chapter), the Zimbabwe Economic Society (ZES) amongst others and such journals as the *Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly* (SAPEM), *Moto*, and *Parade* amongst others have provided an arena for various issues raised in the debate. Even the state-owned media, including the *Chronicle*, *Herald* and the *Sunday Mail* have been forced to acknowledge and react to the debate.

Finally, the debate on democracy and the one-party state had its origin in the early years of independence long before the expiry of the Lancaster House Constitution and the epochal events in Eastern Europe in 1989-1990. This indicates that the democratic culture which was an offshoot of the national liberation struggle has deeper roots and could not be suffocated by diktat. It is a national asset in spite of intolerance and over-sensitivity sometimes demonstrated by some of the government leadership. Thus, the debate has not simply been a reaction to developments in Eastern Europe and elsewhere in Africa. But if the past eleven years in Zimbabwe demonstrate anything, it is that both the democratic space and a progressive intellectual culture require careful nurturing and not

intellectual adventurism, opportunism, exhibitionism and abstruse abstraction.

## OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

The introductory chapter by the editors sets out the immediate context of the Zimbabwe debate on the one-party state and one of its outcomes, namely the rescinding of the intention to introduce a *de jure* one-party state. It is explained that the massive popular opposition from within civil society and divisions within the ruling ZANU-PF over the issue combined to influence the decision against the installation of a *de jure* one-party state. There follow a definition and critique of the concepts of *democracy*, *one-party state* and *socialism* to set the framework for the debate developed in the following chapters.

In his chapter, Mandaza elaborates on the critique of the limitations of the current democracy debate not only in relation to Zimbabwe but to Southern Africa as a whole. Observing that the current debate in Africa on the one-party state is but a manifestation of the crisis of the state, democracy and development, he argues that both to understand the crisis and the debate, it is necessary to focus on the post-colonial state in Africa and its relationship to civil society. This requires a holistic approach which encompasses a historical analysis of the continent — and therefore requires a methodology — if the debate on governance and on the one-party state in Africa is not to border on the abstract, reflecting a tendency to view the African situation as "peculiarly African". Within the Southern African situation in particular, it becomes self-evident, according to Mandaza, why the issue of governance and democracy cannot be understood outside the context of the post-white settler colonial state and the inherited economy. He concludes that both the modernisation theory rooted in the West and the theory of the vanguard party espoused in communist party systems in the East 'legitimised' the one-party state concept in Africa.

The broad national and social context of the democracy debate in Zimbabwe is laid out in Sachikonye's chapter. He surveys the various contending positions on the one-party state question and shows that it lay at the centre of the electoral contests in 1989 and 1990 between ZANU-PF and the opposition, principally the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). In his view, the debate should be broadened so that it also focuses the substantive material content of democracy. Debate on such issues as the land question, economic liberalisation and structural adjustment programme has been restricted by the state precisely because of their allusions to democratic

demands and struggles. Finally, in agreement with Mandaza and most contributors in this book, Sachikonye argues that the existence of a civil society whose institutions question the hegemony of the state on specific questions relating to democracy is an important bulwark against authoritarianism. In this respect, the apparent *volte face* by the ZANU-PF leadership in September 1990 on the establishment of a *de jure* one-party state is an eloquent testimony to the strength, cogency and popular dimensions of the critique of the one-party state concept by civil society institutions.

In a somewhat sombre analysis, Zimunya discusses the 'African condition' in relation to Zimbabwe; he upbraids the repression of the mass media and intellectuals by governments intolerant of all forms of criticism, including constructive criticism. As Makamure, Moyo and Ncube elaborate in their respective chapters, Zimunya cites examples of political intimidation and a pervasive anti-intellectual culture in Zimbabwe and argues for a culture of tolerance and debate.

Masipula Sithole extends the debate in opening his chapter by observing that Zimbabwe has been a *de facto* one-party state since 1980. A *de jure* one-party state is therefore neither necessary nor obligatory on either prudential or moral grounds. As Musarurwa also asks in a later chapter, Sithole asks what is wrong with a popular *de facto* one-party state. In a critique of 'democratic centralism', he faults it for laying more emphasis on top-down centralism than on the 'democratic' side of the equation. However, Sithole concludes on a more optimistic note perhaps than some of the contributors in this volume when he points out that "we are still relatively free people: we still have an alternative press"; the 25-year old State of Emergency has been scrapped and President Mugabe could not afford to ignore popular wishes on the one-party state question.

Moyo takes up themes that other contributors reflect in their chapters: the arguments that the national question is still unresolved, the contention that democracy is a much more important human ideal to strive for than national unity and that ZANU-PF has no socialist programme. It is also the issue of the relationship between socialism and the one-party state that Makamure, Rukobo and Chung also reflect in their respective chapters. While Makamure broadly agrees with Moyo's critique of the one-party state (an earlier version appeared in the *Financial Gazette* of 30th March, 1990), he challenges his critique of Marxism. There is no incompatibility between socialism and a multi-party state, both Makamure and Chung contend in their chapters. After exploring the contradictions of 'capitalist democracy', Makamure argues that broadening democracy means fighting for the



establishment of full working class and peasant participation in the political, economic and cultural life of society. This would lay the basis for a socialist democracy. In a related vein, Rukobo criticises the restrictive and formalistic conception of democracy as primarily concerned with political systems, and contends that any serious discussion of democracy should be related to the question of imperialist domination and the need to create a national economy as a strategy of reducing that domination. However, Rukobo posits that the economic question should be posed first in the discussion of democracy thus raising the question whether simultaneous development and multi-party state democracy are in fact incompatible.

In her critique of the one-party state, Chung believes that although it could bring harmony for a decade or so, it is unlikely to bring about economic modernisation and industrialisation for which some foreign technology and investment are required. Indeed, in her view, the one-party state is an unnecessary distraction from more critical issues such as wealth and land redistribution.

Mutambara summarises the university students' position on, and Musarurwa the labour movement's own perspectives towards, the one-party state and socialism. Students argued that the one-party state could lead to a fascist dictatorship, a fossilised political system characterised by a personality cult and to crude forms of primitive accumulation by the petty bourgeoisie. Musarurwa explains the unequivocal position of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) in its support of political pluralism and tests Zimbabwean democratic practice against such aspects as unfettered access to the media by political parties, freedom of assembly, freedom from abuse of state power, appointment of some MPs by the President and the extensive use of subsidiary legislation and finds large gaps.

The last two chapters by Ncube and Makumbe respectively analyse constraints on democratic political practice, the conduct and outcome of the 1990 general and presidential elections. Ncube argues that behind the facade of 'constitutionalism' which has been created by the Zimbabwe state, in fact lies an authoritarian political system, serious violation of basic democratic rights, human rights and the rule of law. Outlining in some detail the Rhodesian repressive legacy, he observes that the post-independence period has witnessed continuity between the colonial and post-colonial security patterns. He also contends that Rhodesian repressive laws and undemocratic traditions were perpetuated in the handling of the post-independence civil war in Matabeleland. In the political violence during the 1985 and 1990 elections, Ncube sees the undermining

of the democratic process and culture. Makumbe elaborates on this theme in his analysis of the conduct and outcomes of the 1990 elections. He marshals some evidence to support his argument that the 1990 elections were not free and fair: for example, there was unequal access to the media by the opposition, there were cases of intimidation of opposition candidates and use of government resources by the ruling party in its electoral campaign. Makumbe sees the beginnings of a process of depoliticisation underlined by low voter turnout due to apathy. However, despite the large ZANU-PF victory, the 1990 election result was not a mandate for a one-party state, he contends.

The chapters in this volume show that there is no monolithic position in the debate on the one-party state and democracy. There are, for example, differences of emphasis or nuance over the *degree* of the existing democratic space and *significance* of civil society's opposition to state authoritarianism in Zimbabwe. Yet, it is not very difficult to overestimate the capacity of the state to repress democratic opposition; but this can easily ascribe to the view of the state as a monolithic entity. However, if the state is also indeed a terrain of struggles — and the last eleven years demonstrate this — then some of the pessimism or dismissiveness towards the potential and trajectory of on-going democratic struggles are overdrawn. As we observed above, the abandonment of the intention to install a *de jure* one-party state is only one example where the state has had to make a concession to pressure from the civil society. This provides grounds of optimism for the outcome of related democratic struggles in the future.

## FOOTNOTES

1. "No One-Party-State by law — President", *The Herald*, 28 September, 1990.
2. "No New Move on One-Party Issue", *The Herald*, 3 October, 1990.
3. Others will conclude that this showed something akin to disdain for the Zimbabwean people who had to hear of these key decisions about their society out of foreign capitals. In fact, it was during this visit abroad that President Mugabe announced that his government had decided in favour of a trade liberalisation programme that would attract investment and help enhance the economy. Many analysts believe that this decision marked also the *formal* departure from what had hitherto been the Zimbabwean state is apparent commitment to the socialist path.

4. "The ZANU-PF Central Committee yesterday agreed to uphold the 1989 People's congress decision to seek for the establishment of a one-party state, said the Party's Secretary for Information and Publicity, Cde Nathan Shamuyarira." *The Sunday Mail*, 23 September, 1990.
5. Speech delivered at the African Association of Political Science (AAPS) Zimbabwe National Chapter's *Monthly Forum*, 27 September, 1990. See also the published version, "The Past Ten Years and the Future for Democracy" in the *Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly (SAPEM)*, Vol. 4, No. 2.
6. *The Herald*, 3 October, 1990.
7. See, for example, President Mugabe's statement that: "The west can't really teach us democracy. They have no lessons to teach us. They were our colonisers. They never taught us democracy." (*The Herald*, 9 May, 1990). His other report made at a rally in Uganda was to illustrate this argument by stating that "If you look at all of them, whether they are Germans or British or French or Belgians or Italians or Americans, what has their past performances been in Africa? . . . Did they bring you democracy in Uganda? Did the Portuguese leave democracy in Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde? Did the British leave us democracy? We had to take up go to fight against an oppressive system and now they want to be accepted as teachers of democracy. I will say go to hell." (*The Sunday Mail*, 8 July, 1990).
8. See P. Anyang Nyong'o (1987, 1988) and Goldbourne (1987).
9. For a critique of this position with particular reference to Huntington and Sklar, see Beckman (1989).
10. See I. Shivji, "Pitfalls of the Debate on Democracy", *Codesria Bulletin*, 1989.
11. See Moyo's chapter and the critique in Makamure's chapter in this volume.
12. See Rukobo's chapter in this volume.
13. M. Mamdani, 'Contradictory Class Perspectives on the Question of Democracy: The Case of Uganda' in P. Anyang Nyon'o, 1987.
14. A. Mafeje, "The One-Party State in Africa: Reflections and Prospects for Southern Africa", *SAPEM*, September, 1989.
15. The argument that multi-party politics invariably result in divisiveness is also made by Shamuyarira who contended that: "Those who argue that many parties bring democracy are wrong and

misguided . . If you add religion to multiple parties, you are likely to end up with a Lebanon-type situation." *The Herald*, 9 August, 1990.

16. See the chapters in this volume by Zimunya, Musarurwa and Mutambara amongst others.
17. See the chapters by Moyo and Sithole in this volume.
18. See, for example, Makamure's chapter in this volume.

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## CHAPTER ONE

# THE ONE-PARTY STATE AND DEMOCRACY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Ibbo Mandaza

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### INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM OF METHODOLOGY

The current debate in Africa about *governance* — or the *One-Party State* issue — is but a manifestation of the crisis of the state, democracy and development. The developments relating to both the growing prominence of the international human rights movement in the course of the last decade, and the culmination of the crisis in Eastern Europe, have contributed to the high profile that the *African condition* (i.e. the current political and economic crisis) has assumed in 1990. To understand both the nature of the *African condition*, and the current debate about it, it is necessary to focus on the analysis of the *post-colonial state* in Africa and its relationship to *civil society*. Engaged without this holistic approach that encompasses a historical analysis of the continent, the debate on *governance* and on the *One-Party State* in Africa borders on the abstract, reflecting a tendency to view the African situation itself as *peculiarly African*. In general, the latter perception in particular represents one not so unrelated to the now well-known racist stereotypes: namely, that Africans are incapable of ruling themselves. This is the kind of sentiment illustrated in an article, which appeared recently in a leading Western newspaper, entitled "For Distressed Africa, What About International Colonialism?" Excerpts from the article will suffice:

Sub-Saharan Africa is in a terrible condition. The causes are complex, but the result is that most of sub-Saharan Africa has lost control of its own future. Its governments have become the stipendiaries of the International Monetary Fund and other international lending agencies. Economies have all but collapsed as prices have plunged in the markets for Africa's commodities. Between 1980 and 1987 the value of Africa's cocoa exports fell by 38%, that of coffee exports by 41%, of phosphates by 47%, of lumber and wood products by 80%. Investment already has substantially dried up; that happened long before Eastern Europe's liberation.

News from Eastern Europe, and the spirit of liberation it set loose in the world, has affected Africa, producing popular challenge to established authority . . .

But Africa's opposition forces are chaotic and fragmented, usually politically naive, without coherent programs. Opposition leaders often are as much the prisoners of

obsolete or irrelevant ideologies as the people who govern. In fact, Africa has been stripped of its elites. Talented and educated people — the ones Africa desperately needs — are driven into emigration or political exile. Some 70,000 middle- and upper-level managers and administrators have abandoned Africa since the beginning of the 1980s.

In the past it has been convenient to blame Africa's problems on colonialism, or present-day "imperialism". Today it is evident that it makes no difference who is to blame . . .

The Europeans then tried to remake Africa and Africans to their own advantage and in their own image. Whatever the merits of that effort, which was based on a conviction of European superiority, but was not without altruism and sacrifice, it came to an end in the 1950s and 1960s. The moral upheaval produced by the two world wars, and the revolutionary doctrines preached from Moscow and Beijing, destroyed both the Europeans' belief in their right to rule Africa and the Africans' willingness to be ruled. . . .

Today, in fact if not in name, a new colonialism exists. The World Bank, the IMF, the French government and the aid agencies of the other developed countries, together with the private lending institutions, set the terms on which Africa's economies function, or malfunction. . . .

A unique opportunity exists. The Cold War struggle over Africa's ideological orientation is finished. The Soviet Union is ready to cooperate. The United Nations needs a serious role to play in today's world. Africa's post-independence models of state-socialist development and one-party rule are completely discredited. The human needs of Africa are desperate. Disease as well as hunger and chaos threaten its people.

What about a declared, internationalised colonialism for Africa? A disinterested international interventionism? What about installing a frankly paternalist international authority in Africa and a continent-wide development structure and program? The idea may be outrageous in terms of the political pieties of the last 50 years, but those pieties helped put Africa where it is today. What is the alternative to neo-colonialism? Africa's condition demands desperate measures.<sup>1</sup>

But some African analysts, too, are guilty of the tendency to view the *African condition* as *peculiarly African*. How often do we hear these laments, most of which emanate from the most erudite of African writers: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, an eternal indictment on an Africa apparently unable to govern itself; or Ngugi Wa Thiongo's celebrated critiques of the post-colonial society? Likewise, some of our analyses in this collection. As usual, the lament is about the manifestations of deep-seated historical, socio-economic and political factors. Seldom does the lament provide an insight into the causes of this *African condition*; the lament itself hides the causes behind a screen of apparent helplessness which, as the racists would wish to suggest from their own viewpoint, almost justifies the call for a re-colonisation of Africa. Surely, the duty of the analyst is to seek to explain rather than describe; and thereby to contribute toward the resolution of the problem.

If there is anything peculiar about the *African condition*, it is the extent to which it is an outcome of both the character and conjuncture of the

colonisation of the continent and its incorporation into the international capitalist system. This accounts in part for the tendency among many an analyst to generalise the *African condition*; and therefore the expectation among many that out of this apparently common historical experience must arise a *new* and *united* Africa. It is true that Africa's identity today is an outcome of the apparently common historical, political and economic legacy: centuries of underdevelopment by the northern hemisphere; the scourge of slavery and racism both of which have constituted a serious drawback on Africa's economic development and undermined the dignity of the African person; and, consequently, the relationship between these historical factors and the current economic and political malaise that together account for the *African condition* today. But even within this broad sweep, there are important differences and specificities between one African sub-region and another, and between one African country and another. African scholars are nearer now to the consensus that the *African condition* is an outcome of both *internal* and *external* factors. But we need to examine more closely the specificities of these factors with particular reference to the social formations of individual countries. The study of individual countries and situations will help to highlight these differences and specificities and thereby contribute to both the overall understanding of the *African condition* and the possible development of a strategy for recovery. Hence the need for a *methodology* on the basis of which we might begin to understand the key and theoretical conceptual issues about which such a study on governance and democracy should be concerned: *the relationship between the (post-colonial) state and civil society; and the contextual nature of democracy.*

Within the Southern African situation in particular, it becomes self-evident why the issue of *governance* and *democracy* cannot be understood outside the context of the *post-white settler colonial state* and the inherited economy. Here it is necessary to go beyond the mere characterisation of the post-colonial situation as one falling broadly under the concept of *neo-colonialism*. There is need to define its specificity in a given society in motion: both the nature of the state and the extent (and extant) of the civil society. Like other post-colonial states, the *post-white settler colonial state* is caught between on the one hand, the *continuities* and demands of old, as reflected in the economic power of both the former white settlers and international capital (including the overall hegemony of the US and its major Western allies in Southern Africa). On the other hand, there are the inherent and growing economic and social demands of the mass of the people whose consciousness has already been aroused during the colonial period, particularly given the expectations associated with the nationalist

struggle for independence. Within this broad *contradiction* should be considered the new and emergent social and class forces in *civil society*: the various elements of the petty bourgeoisie, the wage earners and other mass organisations; and the complexity of the relationship between *internal* and *external* forces within this historical process. Such a methodological framework provides an insight into — and indeed *explains* — the *political* and *economic* conditions that almost inexorably propel the post-colonial state towards a *one-party state* (*de facto* or *de jure*). But it also helps to explore the conditions and means whereby the *civil society* can create space, overcome those negative aspects and factors, within a *democratisation process*. The Zimbabwe debate on the one-party state and democracy herein should give us a deeper insight into the problematic of the state and democracy in the post-colonial situation.

## THE HISTORICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL BASES OF THE ONE-PARTY STATE IN AFRICA

### Colonialism and Liberal Democracy

The study of the post-colonial state in Africa has been a pre-occupation of scholars for as long as this phenomenon has been with the continent. The field has been dominated by two broad and sometimes conflicting perspectives. As I will attempt to illustrate, both methodologies might have had profound influences on the nature and conduct of the post-colonial state, particularly the extent to which either might have been used as (ideological or theoretical) justification in the tendency towards the *One-Party State* in Africa. First, the conventional one based on the modernisation theories that found their origins in the Rostovian model of traditional Western political science. According to this school, the state and society in developing countries was inherently given to *conflict* and strife. Therefore, *development*, based as it is on Rostow's simplistic but ahistorical theory,<sup>2</sup> was conceived and perceived as the gradual process (*stage by stage*) whereby the *developing society* gradually approximated the (development) model of such developed *societies* — e.g. USA and UK — as were characterised by *stability*, *consensus*, *equilibrium* and *harmony*. This is the school of thought that pervaded as much the political science discipline of the sixties in particular as the *development models* of post-colonial Africa during the same period in general. Indeed, as contentious and controversial as such a submission is likely to be viewed by many in the northern hemisphere, it is this Western-type *development model* that has been the major source of the *ONE-PARTY STATE* in Africa. It sought to provide



both the historical and theoretical justification for a centralised and authoritarian system of governance on the grounds that there was a necessary link between the three phases of African history: the *pre-colonial* period when Africans were governed by centralised and authoritarian kingdoms and chiefdoms all of which invariably assigned a definable and even stable *system*; the *colonial* period during which Africans were introduced — however unfortunately and with whatever consequences — to *modernisation* and *development* by a centralised and authoritarian colonial system that nevertheless tended to bring together, in a kind of a *stable* and unified *system*, all the various pre-colonial groupings within the new territorial boundaries; and the *post-colonial* period during which it was, therefore, imperative that this newly found *unity* be maintained under a strong state and a strong leader, as the guarantee for *stability* and *development*. There was an implicit — not explicit, otherwise how could Africans lament colonialism and celebrate *Independence Day* — acceptance of *continuity* between the three periods. But as we will argue shortly, a major basis of the current *African condition* is also the extent to which these three features and phases of Africa's recent history are so inextricably bound as to be reflected in the socio-economic and political structures of our contemporary societies.

There is an aspect of African political philosophy that tries to conceal this historical reality of *continuity* and yet is definitely an off-shoot of the Western philosophical thinking of which this *development model* (of *unity*, *stability* and *development*) is an outcome. This has been the philosophy that has underpinned the theory and practice of government in much of post-colonial Africa; it is inherent in that complexity that we call the *post-colonial state* that has been Africa's history for the last thirty years. As is illustrated in the writings of Julius Nyerere in particular, this philosophy sought to conceal its link with Western political thought by the apparent rejection of any kind of continuity between the three periods of Africa's recent history: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. Instead, there was the attempt to forge an umbilical link between the *pre-colonial* and *post-colonial* periods. According to the philosophy that inspired and guided this early post-independence period, the attainment of national independence was a return to the blissful past in which African was devoid of classes and characterised by *consensus*, *stability* and *unity*. Hence Nyerere's celebrated book at that time, *Uhuru Na Umoja: Freedom and Unity*.<sup>3</sup> From it developed not only the view that *unity* was the basis for attaining freedom but also that *multi-partyism* was inherently given to disunity and instability. And so it was that for most of the Africa of the 60s and 70s, *One-Party-One-Leader* became the currency. (In fact, it would

appear anomalous to speak of *One Party* without *One Leader* as its corollary.) At worst, the *One-Party-State* (read *One-Leader-State*) was viewed as the necessary price to pay for *stability* and *development*.

Now all should concede that the Nyererian thesis was as mythical as it was romantic. The impression, that *appeared* to wash for a while in Tanzania, must be attributed less to any claim of historical validity than to Nyerere's own style of leadership (not to mention his important contribution to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa); and the fact that a Tanzania that was predominantly peasant in character found itself most receptive to the *paternalism* of a father figure, the *Mwalimu*! Yet it was also on the basis of one-party-one-leader that Africa has produced those life-long personal fascist dictatorships that we need not mention here. But how does one distinguish between the paternalism that underpins or seeks to extol the *One-Party-State* as the only basis for political life on the one hand and, on the other, that of the colonialist who believed that Africans were good for nothing unless nurtured like little children? Not surprisingly, it was not so much the Africans as the Europeans and North Americans who sang praises in the 60s and 70s (read the political science books of the day) about the *One-Party-State* as the guarantor of *development*. Invariably, the pursuit of a *One-Party-State* on the part of those concerned in Africa has been less a response to the mass demand for *freedom* and *democracy* than an attempt to silence and arrest a democratisation process that began in the struggle for *National Liberation* and seeks a full resolution of the *National Question*. So far, the overall negative aspects of the *One-Party-State* in Africa is more than sufficient evidence that this is a political system which is out of step with the realities of our continent.

In short, Western *liberal-democratic philosophy* and its model of *development* provided the resource base upon which such non-leftist but Western-aligned post-colonial African states were born and nurtured. The oft-cited conclusion that *One-Party-States* were born only out of the leftist and Marxist-oriented leaders of Africa is not only partly correct as will be illustrated shortly, but it does reflect either intellectual dishonesty or the extent to which the analyst himself/herself was subject to, and therefore blinded by, the liberal ideology that we have just outlined. For, the central feature of the *post-colonial* state is that it is *essentially a continuation* of the *colonial state*. This is particularly so with regard to the essential organisation of the state itself and its structures. As Ali Mazrui and Michael Tidy point out:

Most new African states emerged into independence with relatively strong legislatures. The nature of the nationalist struggle during the colonial period had given the old Legislative Councils a central position in the political system, and a mystique had

grown round the idea of parliament. Much of the rhetoric of African nationalism was saturated with liberal democratic dicta . . .<sup>4</sup>

However, the same authors reveal their own bias when they equate the development of the *One-Party State* with the gradual evaporation of the "faith in parliamentary institutions".<sup>5</sup> As has already been pointed out in the foregoing, the vagaries of the post-colonial state invariably forced the latter into an inevitable modification of the Westminster model. For, the issue was not so much whether the state was *multi-party* or *one-party*, but how *continuity* was to be maintained and sustained with regard to those essential elements of the *State* that defined the form and content of the emergent nation. It was the *colonial state* that in most cases carved and defined the form and content of a given emergent *post-colonial state*; this had to be sustained within a system which, while it rejected colonialism for what it was, nevertheless adopted the very elements that held the territory together. The achievement of *unity* and *stability* became the overriding objective of the new nation, regardless of how this might run counter to the democratic process that was inherent in the struggle for national independence.

The point here is that the rejection of the Westminster parliamentary model did not necessarily constitute an essential breach with the colonial era; nor did this rejection cause undue concern to those — the former colonial masters — who had bequeathed such a parliamentary model to their African successors. For much of the 1960s and 1970s, it was really a question of whether the *One-Party-State* ruled in the image and interests of the former colonial masters or sought, through a leftist Marxist One-Party system, to cut that umbilical cord in both the political and economic spheres. Thus, there would have been no essential difference in the nature and content of the Ghanaian and Kenyan states under Nkrumah and Kenyatta respectively. Each sought to use the *One-Party State* towards "leftist" and "non-leftist" goals respectively. But Nkrumah earned the wrath of the West, with Ali Mazrui himself dubbing the Ghanaian leader a "Leninist Czar".<sup>6</sup> Not until the 1980s do we see the emergence in liberal democracy of a generalised critique of even the Western-oriented *One-Party states* in Africa. This is, perhaps, an outcome of the end of the *Cold War*, suggesting therefore that the old dichotomy between "leftist" and "Western" in Africa was as shallow as the entire post-colonial record has illustrated. We will return to this theme after a critique of the other school of thought that gave rise to another version of the *One-Party-State*.

## The Liberation Struggle and Marxism-Leninism: The (Sole and Authentic) Vanguard Party and Socialism

Marxism-Leninism has provided the main philosophical basis for modern *political economy*, particularly to the extent that the latter has so far constituted, perhaps, the best methodological framework for the study of society. At the same time, Marxism-Leninism has been subjected to a variety of interpretations, the main of which, for our purposes herein, relates to those of its key elements that have influenced and pervaded the political process in many parts of post-colonial Africa. We refer to the three inter-related concepts in Marxism-Leninism: the *vanguard party*, the *dictatorship of the proletariat* and *socialism*. Of course, it is true that there is not a reference at all to *one-party state* system in Marxist-Leninist theory; and it is often forgotten that the Bolshevik Party of the October Revolution was only one among several other parties, receiving less than a third of the votes in the elections for the Constituent Assembly in 1918. But no doubt, both the import and theory of the *vanguard party* under the *dictatorship of the proletariat* did contribute to the process whereby the *One-Party-State* acquired vigour and sought legitimacy in the leftist and Marxist-oriented regimes of both Europe and the Third World. For, implicit in this theory of the *vanguard party* and the *dictatorship of the proletariat* was that of the *sole and authentic party*, infallible and therefore synonymous with the *State* and *masses* alike. Accordingly, it is not difficult to see how such a theory became distorted conveniently, in the search for some kind of philosophical justification on the part of *One-Party States* that were invariably outcomes of the social and political processes of the respective countries concerned. Likewise, within the intellectual and academic spheres it gave rise to that genre of scholars that were so intolerant of the views of their counterparts; given to factionalism even within the left itself; producing a new vocabulary in social science: the only *correct* line, the only *correct* ideology!

Yet it is also true that the Soviet Union in particular and the socialist bloc in general provided, through their support for Communist Parties and/or such national liberation movements as emerged throughout the Third World in the course of this century, a major resource base that tended to further reinforce the *One-Party State* regimes of the leftist type. In the early days, such parties and movements had to earn the recognition of the Soviet Union if they were to be regarded as "*authentic*"; but by the late 1960s, the Sino-Soviet split left most of these parties and movements of the Third World almost evenly divided between the Soviet Union and China as their main and respective supporters, particularly with regard to military back-up in the form of training and supply of arms.

That was indeed the pattern in Southern Africa, with the Soviet Union baptising six of the National Liberation Movements as the "*sole*" and "*authentic*" movements among the various groups that were involved in the struggles for national liberation. The six were the ANC (including its concomitant organisation, the Communist Party) of South Africa, ZAPU of Zimbabwe, SWAPO of Namibia, the PAIGC of Guinea Bissau, MPLA of Angola and FRELIMO of Mozambique. Likewise, China baptised its own "*authentic*" organisations, usually out of those who had been labelled "*rebel*" movements by the Soviet Union and its allies: ZANU, PAC and UNITA of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Angola respectively. Both the dynamics of the struggle itself and, perhaps, also the decline of the Sino-Soviet conflict, would distort a bifurcation that had hitherto reflected more this super-power rivalry than any ideological differences between the various movements in the various countries of Southern Africa. Besides, there is so far little evidence that the national liberation movements, some of whom are now in power, really imbibed and internalised the ideological persuasions of either the Soviet Union or China. At the end of the day, it was a question of which of the two would provide material support for a struggle that was essentially nationalist in character.

At any rate, to the extent that the main thrust and nature of the liberation struggle in Southern African purported to be based upon Marxism-Leninism and the idea of a "*sole*" and "*authentic*" *vanguard party*, so too, did this provide both the justification and the impetus towards a *One-Party-State* in the post-colonial period. The most logical application of this thesis was in the Mozambican case when Samora Machel declared that FRELIMO was a vanguard Marxist-Leninist party. With but a few modifications, *all* national liberation movements that succeed to state power will try to impose on the society the imprint of the "*sole*" and "*authentic*" *one-party*. More important, this emphasis on the principle of the *sole and authentic* Liberation Movement provided the rationale, and indeed the licence, whereby the Party in the post-independence period can ride rough-shod — *in the interests of the masses!* — over the interests of the very people it purports to serve. In particular, it is the *militarist* element — regrettably the most dominant feature of most Liberation Movements — which militates against democracy, places limits on the civil society and, ultimately, provides a (dubious) justification for all that is done in the name of the "people", in the "noble tradition of the heroic national liberation struggle"! It is a problem that is most pronounced in liberation movements which, as has been the case with respect to those of Southern Africa, have had to operate in *exile*, away from the home base (or the *civil society*) which might have provided the element of *accountability* in the absence of which

there have been reports of "atrocities" and "detentions" at the hands of certain fascist elements within the liberation movement itself. As will be argued shortly, it is the *civil society* — of which the educated petit bourgeoisie is an important element — that can help temper this *political instinct* on the part of the African petit bourgeoisie once it has attained political power in this era of the dominance of international capital. Conversely, it is this same *political instinct*, based as it is on the weakness and *compradorian* tendencies of this class, which propels the development towards a *One-Party State* in most of our societies.

There was, of course, the obvious relationship between the pursuit of a *one-party/vanguard* state and *socialism*. But as in the case of the theory of *vanguard party*, there was likewise no clear conception of the theory and practice of *socialism*. It is enough that Marxism-Leninism has generally been abused in *practice* in most of those countries that purport to be socialist. This has also been so with regard to the post-liberation struggle societies of Southern Africa. Here ideological commitment alone — no matter how emotional and romantic — became synonymous with socialism; there was no essential difference between that conception of socialism as a "state of mind" (*viz.* Nyerere<sup>7</sup> and "African Socialism"; and the social democratic conception of socialism) and the rhetoric that oozed out of such countries as Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (and not forgetting South Africa and Namibia). To begin with, the liberation movements of Southern Africa reveal no attempt to deal with the theoretical considerations of *socialist construction*, particularly with regard to those aspects that are essential to the process. Unresolved is the theoretical and practical question of whether it is possible to advance to socialism with an essentially *peasant base*. Joe Slovo asserted, some twenty years ago, that it was possible to advance to socialism through the *non-capitalist* road.<sup>8</sup> This implicitly meant that the peasantry and not necessarily a large proletariat as would be associated with a capitalist path to socialism, could constitute such a basis for socialist construction. Twenty years later, Slovo accuses FRELIMO of "premature transformation of the movement into a communist vanguard"<sup>9</sup> (referring to Samora Machel's declaration of 1979). The point here is that there is as yet no clear guideline as to the means whereby the socialist transition is to be effected, particularly in the post-white settler colonial societies of Southern Africa, including South Africa itself. Clearly, the National Liberation Movements of Southern Africa have almost characteristically lacked the where-withal of dealing with economic issues in preparation for independence. Despite articulate statements about liberation, they have been unable to produce even a vague blue-print — *an economic plan of action* — when it came to the question of

translating political independence into even some form of *national* control of the *commanding heights* of the economy. To that extent, the oft-cited claim that the *armed struggle* would foreclose neo-colonialism now rings false and worthless against the reality we have experienced so far in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe; and, as appears inevitable, also in Namibia and South Africa. Indeed, it can be argued that all these countries are no different in essence from what prevails in such countries as Zambia, Malawi, Swaziland or Botswana.

The historical reason for this indictment on post-independence is now well-known; and has been adequately illustrated with particular reference to the history of white settler colonialism in Southern Africa. In the light of the latter, it would have been sheer madness — if not tantamount to suicide — for the independence government of Zimbabwe or Namibia to confront the economic issues head-on. The nature of the *settlement* itself constituted a dilemma: how to pursue political independence to its *logical* conclusion without reaping *economic instability* and courting the disfavour of the international community. Yet even the legal and constitutional obligations to which independence was tied did not constitute a complete iron-wall against which a well-considered programme of even gradual change could not have been implemented. Analysts will have to consider carefully why most post-independence governments have been able to *Africanise* the public sector through a degree and level of affirmative action whereas they have allowed the private sector to continue as before.

But our initial observations about Zimbabwe in this regard point to factors which might also be applicable to Namibia and South Africa. First, the poor technocratic base with which the National Liberation Movement could hope to tackle the issues of the economy. That is, the tendency to seek first the political kingdom in the hope that all else would follow. *Second*, the ideological confusion over the relationship between the public and private sectors, between the state and the economy. This was hinged to the question of how to begin the process of building a *National economy* out of an economy that was so essentially insecure given both the reliance on a transient and itinerant white community and the dependence on international capital. The confusion over these issues became evident in the debate over the *Leadership Code*: this was based on the naive belief that if leaders were clean and exemplary, then in due course the entire society might learn to accept and practise the virtues of socialism; but it was best understood popularly as a *law* to which only those in leadership should adhere, while others — particularly the whites — were free to amass fortunes. It is interesting to note that the average member of the public will

raise eyebrows at a Minister who amasses fortune while expressing little or no concern at those — white and black — wealthy ones in the private sector. This is also because the post-colonial state is still viewed as the terrain for contest, the gateway to power and wealth for the blacks who hitherto had no other way of attaining bourgeois status; and therefore members of the state are envied — rather than critiqued — by most of those not yet so fortunate as to gain access either to the state or into the ranks of those few who have managed it on the basis of black advancement. The state remains ambivalent about the reality of the Zimbabwean economy: sometimes accepting capitalism as something to be tolerated in the interim, and, at other times, insisting that socialism is on the agenda. Therefore, how can the State promote *black control* in the private sector without appearing to favour capitalist development even among its own people?

From this arises a *third* factor. This is the inherent fear of the post-colonial state to have alternative centres of power in society. Invariably, therefore, the objective of trying to ensure that those who became rich — particularly outside the state — do not become prospective contenders for state power. And hence the attempt by the State to direct and regulate the level of capitalist accumulation — and likewise also the pace of black advancement — among its indigenous population. As a member of the governing class, it becomes part of your mission to ensure that only those of your kith and kin, or those likely to support your political enterprise, should wax rich and advance in the private sector.

At the end of the day, the issue of *black advancement* is caught in the myriad of post-colonial petty bourgeois political wrangling: the blacks — mainly the middle classes — are *politically* pre-occupied with how best to contain and constrain each other; while the former white settlers continue to control and dominate the *economic* field. It is a sad indictment on the history of National Liberation in Southern Africa that the post-independence struggle should be reduced to a call for *black advancement* and not *black control*. This is the legacy of white settler colonialism, the *post-white settler colonial situation*. At what stage — and how — will this whimper for *advancement* be transformed into the self-assertion of *control*?

Reference has already been made to the thin line of distinction between radical and right wing *one-party state* regimes in Africa. But it needs to be highlighted here that the exaggerated distinction that hitherto existed conceptually should be attributable to some elements of the leftist movement in the northern hemisphere and its "revolutionary mythology".<sup>10</sup> Together with some of the radical intellectuals of Africa, these leftists of Europe and North America helped to project the liberation



movements as revolutionary and Marxist-Leninist; thereby presenting such governments-to-be as far better alternatives to the *reactionary nationalism* of other liberation movements who, in the view of these leftist elements of the northern hemisphere, were likely to be as "tribalist" and "corrupt" as their counterparts in those countries of Africa which had not undergone a violent armed struggle. Such a conception would help to de-emphasise and conceal those aspects of the Marxist-Leninist tradition to which most of the public of the northern hemisphere were opposed. On the contrary, it created a stronger basis for consensus within the northern hemisphere, about how an inherently *unstable, tribal and backward* Africa might better be re-designed and re-shaped through strong centralised states, preferably showing a general subscription and commitment to the *Western development model*.

In general, any movement that remained uncompromisingly *black nationalist* in its outlook would find itself with fewer friends in the northern hemisphere than one which purported to be Marxist-Leninist while extolling the virtues of "non-racialism", "multi-racialism", etc. More than three hundred years of imperialist and racist domination of Africa (and the Third World) has meant that the average white person in the northern hemisphere feels uncomfortable about the subject of *race* and *black nationalism*. Accordingly, both the *left* and *right* in the northern hemisphere have sought to recreate Africa in their respective images. For, it is a feature of the current conjuncture that *African* (or *black*) struggles have seldom been conceded their own autonomy in a world so dominated historically and culturally by an aggressive and dominant northern hemisphere. This has given rise to a kind of white paternalism — *left* and *right* — which views as its major *mission* the need to patronise and even hegemonise the struggles of the oppressed and exploited peoples of the Third World. Indeed the latter is in itself the *raison d'être* of modern (racial) paternalism and liberalism. Likewise the objects and subjects of this paternalism to survive and be able to mobilise international support in a world of limited friends and resources, Africans have invariably compromised the very issues upon which the struggle was based: *black nationalism* and the *national question*. The consequent de-emphasis on these key issues will have deprived the national liberation movement — particularly that which declared itself to be "*sole*" and "*authentic*" *Marxist-Leninist* — of the means whereby it might build a broader *nationalist coalition*, as the basis for the emergent new nation in the post-independence period. In pursuit of being seen as "reasonable" and "rational", African leaders and their movements have had to *pretend* and speak tongue-in-cheek about an issue — *racism* — which is essentially a

product of the history of the northern hemisphere (and the nature of its relations with the Third World). Whereas it should be those of the northern hemisphere that should feel guilty about racism and thereby preach the gospel of non-racism among themselves, it is now the Africans who feel even more guilty about any political expression that might be misconstrued as being anti-white, even though it is inconceivable that there can be such a thing as *black racism*. All the same, it became a major objective of governments borne out of the liberation struggle to seek to prove *ad nauseam* that they were "non-racist"; and in as far as this sometimes meant making concessions to the former white settlers (e.g. including a disproportionate number of these in the Cabinet), this became a bone of contention between the ruling party in government and other contending nationalist groups. In short, "non-racial" type concessions often reflect a failure to deal with the *National Question* on the part of post-liberation struggle governments; and this in itself constituted an important cause for internal conflict and the gradual erosion of the legitimacy and power of the post-colonial state. The last fifteen years of Angolan and Mozambican history is but a confirmation of the contradiction and/or antithesis between on the one hand ideological declarations designed to pander to international public opinion; and, on the other, the commitment to a *nationalist coalition* which, by definition, is borne out of the acknowledgement of political diversity as the very basis and means of nation-building.

For example, only a brief historical analysis will reveal the extent to which the demise of UNITA in Angola was more an outcome of the leftist propaganda — emanating mainly out of Europe and North America — that projected it as a reactionary and racist movement than the fact that it later aligned itself to the South African state and the imperialist camp. With little or no scrutiny, the dichotomy between MPLA and UNITA was accepted among African and non-African radicals alike. It would require another fifteen years or more, with the immense bloodshed and suffering that Angola has had to undergo *pro-temp*, before the dichotomy would be exposed as largely superficial. The current turn-around towards *multi-partyism* in these post-liberation war societies (Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia and even South Africa) is testimony that there was something inherently wrong with the tendency towards *one-partyism*. As President Chissano stated recently when he announced that FRELIMO had decided against the one (Marxist-Leninist) party system:

The fundamental point is that we believe that no-one has the right to deny its citizens who want to form political parties within the law.<sup>12</sup>

Likewise, dos Santos of Angola, speaking on the occasion that his government declared multi-partyism, emphasised the need:

to ensure that the different opinions, interests and aspirations which exist in civil society are expressed.<sup>13</sup>

More than that, this might also reflect favourably on a *civil society* whose very nature and composition is antithetical to a *One-Party State*. For, the decision — by either Chissano, dos Santos, Mugabe or Kaunda — against a legislated *one-party state* cannot be a matter of discretion, dependent upon the whims and fancies of a given leadership. Wise leaders are those who demonstrate a capacity to respond to the yearnings and grumblings of a civil society; and in responding in the manner that they have, these leaders have strengthened the *civil society* in these countries. The Namibian experience so far proves that nation-building is very possible with eight parties in Parliament. And all the indications are that the South African comrades will have learnt from both their neighbours and the totality of the global experience in governance. Again, it is with respect to South Africa that there exists a tendency within some of the elements — rightist or leftist — in the northern hemisphere, to anoint a particular party as the *sole and authentic*. It is true that the *socialist bloc* characteristically recognised no other group than the ANC and its concomitant organisation, the Communist Party; all other parties and groups — particularly the PAC and those of the Black Consciousness persuasion — were regarded as *reactionary*. But likewise in the rest of the northern hemisphere the dominant tendency has been to focus on the ANC to the exclusion of all else. Thus it was not enough for some in the northern hemisphere to discredit *black consciousness* as either false consciousness or "conservative"; it became essential to try and demonstrate that it had no roots, in the black society of South Africa, that the South African state would rather "live with black consciousness" than with a (more radical ANC). This is the import of those analyses characteristic of the kind of tendencies to which we have referred in the foregoing. For, Julie Fredrickse's book — *The Unbreakable Thread: Non-Racialism in South Africa*<sup>14</sup> — amounts to no more than an attempt to reinterpret South African history, even in the face of the reality that is unfolding in that country. As Patrick Laurence asks of Julie Fredrickse:

Why then did the Vorster regime ban and detain a succession of black consciousness leaders from 1972 onwards? Why did the State try key black consciousness leaders for terrorism in the black consciousness trial of 1975-76?<sup>15</sup>

The historical record, concludes Laurence, demonstrates:

the strength of black consciousness in 1977 rather than its weakness. One need only think of the student demonstration at the time. They were conducted under the banner of black consciousness, not of the Freedom Charter or of the ANC.<sup>16</sup>

Of course, there has always been continuity in the history and development of black protest and struggle in both South Africa and the rest of the continent. It is only mechanistic historiography that will seek to fragment that process between one phase and another, between one party and another. No member of one movement — including the Black Consciousness Movement — could claim that their struggle was autonomous from that of the ANC or PAC. And yet it is a clear reflection of that negative tendency in political analyses to seek to balkanise the liberatory process by both over-zealous partisanship and the attempt to anoint certain organisations as the *sole and authentic*. Happily, the events of the last year alone, not to mention the totality of the South African experience, might put paid to the kind of subjective analyses that have so far characterised writings of the white left in both South Africa and beyond. The indications are that the African leaders of South Africa have acknowledged the political diversity that is their country and are intent on creating a broad *nationalist coalition*. As Itumeleng Mosala (of AZAPO) stated recently:

Ideally, it would have been nice to have had one homogeneous united liberation movement. It would have been nice for obvious reasons. For example, there would have been little if no tensions at all among those opposed to the same enemy. Mobilisation of the masses of the people behind the gigantic task of overthrowing the system of apartheid capitalism would have been made easier. Fewer people would get killed in internecine political strife. The prospect of divisions among the oppressed as a result of the work of the oppressors in our midst would be greatly diminished. Above all, the Witdoek incidents in 1985/86 would not have happened; the massacre of black people in the violence that has gripped Natal in the last few years would have been made difficult. Indeed, the carnage in Thokoza, Vosloorus, Kagiso and Soweto just recently, would probably never have happened.

Unfortunately, idealism, like logic, is not truth. The fact of the matter is that there is not one homogeneous, united liberation movement in our country. And it is doubtful whether it is ever desirable that there should be one, homogeneous, united liberation movement.

Like other people in the world, blacks are thinking, creative and diverse people. They are not intellectually or conceptually homogeneous simply by virtue of being black. Like other people, they are products of history and society and many times, victims of history and society.

The plurality of liberation movements is, therefore, a blessing and not a curse. It is a welcome development of the black struggle for liberation in occupied Azania. It was right that different traditions of struggle should have evolved in the course of our resistance. It is a good thing and not a bad thing, that different liberation movements should have come into being to reflect the nature of our wrestling with the problem of our liberation.

I would like to put it to you that each of the traditions of struggle, represented by the various liberation movements, is not only a product of particular historical circumstances, but in fact represents a development on the struggle of our people for national and social liberation.

This means that the plurality of liberation movements is not in itself to be regarded as unfortunate. After all, we are involved in a struggle for liberation. Struggle means that we are to struggle for freedom not only against the oppressors but even against those of our own whose souls and minds are in the pockets of our exploiters. This we must do for as Steve Bantu Biko so aptly observed:

*The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.*

We must not allow the detractors of our struggle, especially the self-righteous white liberal types and their servile black lackeys, to induce a paralysing sense of guilt on us by deliberately, maliciously and in typically populist manner, confusing our plurality with our disunity.

There is, of course, disunity in our struggle. There is *debilitating* disunity. But surely it is the height of racism to equate black political plurality with disunity while treating white ideological and political plurality as democratic diversity.<sup>17</sup>

## THE PROBLEM OF DEMOCRATISING THE ECONOMY IN THE POST-COLONIAL SITUATION

The foregoing account has tried to demonstrate that (narrow and romantic) *leftism* has invariably been the cause of as much autocratic and authoritarian rule as *rightism* has produced in Africa. The interesting difference in the current phase, however, is that it is such "leftist" regimes and post-liberation struggle societies as those of Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, that have demonstrated a capacity to respond to the yearnings of the *civil society*. In this category should be included Zambia whose leadership has conceded to the call for multi-partyism; and Tanzania where *one-partyism* remains only nominal. By contrast, such countries as Malawi, Swaziland and even Lesotho, remain largely unresponsive to the pressures for a democratic order. The contrast, — however superficial — between, for example, such countries as Tanzania and Zimbabwe on the one hand, and Malawi and Kenya on the other, is interesting in this respect. It is not that the *civil society* in the latter societies is non-existent or weak as compared to those of the former; it might be simply a question of the weight of the unresponsiveness and rigidity of the state and the key elements that constitute it. But it does suggest that democracy is not *given*, not to mention the fact that there can be no "pure democracy" as long as different *classes* exist ("we can only speak of *class* democracy").<sup>18</sup> In the final analysis, it is not a question of *one party* or *multi-party* state. Herein, it has been important to demonstrate the *political* and *economic* conditions that almost inexorably propel the post-colonial state towards such undemocratic tendencies as are expressed in the *one-party system*. But these conditions are evidently present even in those societies — like Botswana — which declare themselves *multi-party*; and this alone should dispel the oft-cited correlation between

*multi-partyism* and *democracy*. The struggle for democracy in most of our countries in Africa involves the need to steer carefully, creating space, developing fora, informing and highlighting the main elements of the political and economic reality that all progressives are intent upon transforming.

The problem of the state and democracy in Africa has to be considered in the context of the historical, socio-economic and political factors that constitute the totality of that social process. Any attempt to abstract and isolate issues relating to this process might assist only in highlighting particular problems without however explaining their bases. The historical and political bases of the post-colonial state can also be explained in the context of the contradiction between what might be considered to be a clearly defined mandate — or *policy framework* — on the part of African Nationalist Struggles for National Independence; and the failure to fulfil and carry out that mandate as evidenced in the current political and economic crisis that now grips the continent. For, the post-independence track record — and, therefore, progress in *Development* — has to be assessed in relation to the new state's capacity to resolve the *National Question*; the resolution of the *Land Question*; the *question* of wages and an improved standard of living; democratisation of education and health systems; the restoration of the dignity of the African person after centuries of white domination; and, in general, *liberation* from those forms of oppression and exploitation that characterised the colonial period. These were the very issues about which the liberation struggle was waged; and there was *general consensus* — between the leaders of the liberation movement and its mass base — that these demands will be met. More than that, even the detractors of the liberation movement expected that this would be the *agenda* of the new government, and had done everything possible to forestall that development. To what extent, therefore, was this agenda a mere ploy; a smoke-screen behind which the leadership could secure this support of the masses towards the fulfilment of its own class interests, to the exclusion of the mass of the people?

Clearly, the question of the *economy* is central to that of *democracy*. But, as has already been pointed out as characteristic of most of post-independence Africa, it has been easier to implement reforms in the *social* sectors than it has been to attend to economic transformation issues. There is, perhaps, as yet no match in modern post-independent Africa to Zimbabwe's progress in *social development*: i.e. the democratisation of education and health systems. Indeed, the increase in the number of schools, roads, clinics and water utilities in the rural areas have all tended, for the time being, to

submerge — at least to the extent that there has so far been no discernible *land/peasant movement* — the state's failure to resolve the *Land Question*. These achievements continue to project a favourable contrast with the acute deprivation of the colonial era of just eleven years ago, the state's resolve, as announced in the Tenth Anniversary of Independence, to grapple with the *Land Question* will, for the next five years before the next General Election, determine whether this pattern of progress in *rural development* will continue to be acknowledged by the rural masses.

Thus, progress in social development in Zimbabwe reflects on the one hand, the need for the new state to respond to mass demands with respect to such superstructural factors as had been the cause of mass protests and politics in the period of the nationalist struggle, mainly because of the visible contrast with the privileged condition that the white settlers enjoyed: belief — i.e. the *ideology* — has always been that an improvement in *social development* — particularly education — was a precondition for both economic *achievement* and *equality*. Yet, as has already been stated in the foregoing, it would take a decade, and perhaps even longer, for many to realise that social and political development might be advanced further than was the situation at pre-independence while *economic power* — including the *land* — remains largely in the hands of the former white settlers. Also, external support (aid) for *social development* programmes left the impression that some factors in the international community hoped that, by placing priority in this sphere, this might contain demands for radical economic changes; thereby ensuring that Zimbabwe conformed to the conventional and acceptable economic policy framework to which it subscribes to this day. (Incidentally, that appears to be the plan in store for the *post-apartheid* South Africa.) Indeed there is need to consider further the nature and content of what might be described as an *ideology of social development*, at least to the extent that it serves an important (ideological) function in trying to disguise and conceal not only the problematic of the post-colonial state but also the latter's incapacity to deal with economic transformative issues.

As a recent analysis of the Zimbabwe economy has concluded, *only 4% of the population owns 90% of the wealth*.<sup>19</sup> So that, with the lapse of time, the positive impact of minimum wage laws ever since independence will have waned and increasingly be rendered meaningless in a society of such disparities, and in relation to the State's failure to redress these fundamental issues. At best, the State has become a mediator between capital and labour, between the aspirations of the people for the "fruits of independence" and the imperatives of capital and its quest for more profits.

Accordingly, the *transition* itself has been confined to strict and narrow parameters of change and transformation, with the intentions and objectives of the National Liberation Movement increasingly *transformed* into the ideological rhetoric and the class fulfilment of those few — the *nouveau riches* — who have been integrated into the hitherto only white society. There was, therefore, a relationship between, on the one hand, this constrained capacity to answer the demands of the urban wage earners and disgruntled members of the African middle class (the *petit-bourgeoisie*); and, on the other, the lower turn-out and even back-turning on the ruling party on the part of a large section of the urban voters in the 1990 General Election. The question of wages, unemployment and *black advancement* (note, not *black control*!) are the issues that cry out loud in the urban areas of Zimbabwe. It is a sad indictment on Zimbabwe's first decade that there should still be a cry for *black advancement*, and not *black control*.

In the meantime — and the 1990 Election results testify — both the urban wage earners and the petty bourgeoisie (particularly the professionals, University students and intellectuals) must acknowledge that their role is less fundamental in post-independence electoral politics than that of the rural masses. It is a factor which has provoked other post-colonial states into a conscious and deliberate alliance with the peasant masses, against both the urban wage earners and the petty bourgeoisie. Besides, a large section of the urban wage earners still has strong linkages with the rural areas, a factor which, as Lloyd Sachikonye<sup>20</sup> indicates, constitutes a significant drawback on the development of the Labour Movement in Zimbabwe. But the proletarianisation of the peasantry is developing at an even faster rate; and one might add that the advances made in the field of education in particular — *viz*, the growth in the number of post-school students — will also contribute to, rather than detract from, the political conscientisation of the masses in general.<sup>21</sup> The question is whether Zimbabwe will, in the years to come, successfully throw off this cloud of the white settler colonial legacy, resolve the *Land Question*, and deal effectively with the economic transformative issues (without which she cannot hope to resolve growing unemployment) and lay the foundations for a *national* economy. There has to be democratisation of the economy. This has to go beyond the creation of a *compradorian bourgeoisie*; and the danger with the current *structural adjustment* and *liberalisation programmes* in Zimbabwe is that it will strengthen the link between on the one hand, international capital and, on the other, a growing alliance of an essentially *compradorian* state and the emergent *compradorian black bourgeoisie*. Such a development might be indeed an improvement on what has hitherto prevailed in Zimbabwe: i.e. the dominance of the former white settlers



throughout the economy, in cohorts with international capital but with no commitment to the national project in Zimbabwe on the part of most of them. (In fact, indications so far are that the *white factor* in Southern Africa might be so *transient* given a longer historical perspective into a future in which Africans will have to resolve the *national question*. Many whites will leave Southern Africa eventually and those that will remain to make it their home will have little or no influence in either economic or political affairs.) But the question is whether there exists the capacity within the state to induce an economic policy framework that will lay the bases for *national economy*, based on classes that have *national consciousness* and are therefore anti-imperialist.

## CONCLUSION: THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

These are but some of the issues to be considered within such a conceptual framework that should *not* over-generalise the *African condition*, taking into account the important differences that exist between one society and another throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. But in doing so, to highlight those elements that constitute — even if only embryonic at this stage — the *civil society*. Essential to the comprehension of the African scene — including the very questions of democracy and transformation — is a methodology that highlights the nature of the post-colonial state and the class structure that it inherits. Therefore the analysis of the social process in Africa requires that we take into account the relationship between state and civil society, not necessarily as diametrically opposed forces, but as factors that impinge one upon the other, almost dialectically related. The process will depend on the extent to which the totality of the *civil society* — mass-based social and political organisations, the various fractions and factions of the petty bourgeoisie, intellectuals and students — will continue to temper the *political instinct* characteristic of a dependent and compradorian post-colonial state, at times variously constituting a key element within that state, and at other times variously posing as the *unofficial opposition* when the state has become so weak as to self-propel itself towards the *One-Party State*. This struggle for democracy and development is a complex process about which there can be no reliable predictions as to the outcome. We have raised herein some of the issues with regard to the problematic of the relationship between the post-colonial state and *the struggle for democracy*. These are some of them: that the post-colonial state is so weak and dependent that it develops anti-democratic tendencies, as it is confronted with its own inherent failure to deal with popular demands; that the post-colonial state remains the terrain of contest, particularly between

the various factions and fractions of the petty bourgeoisie; and that the peasantry and wage earning classes are so *disorganised* by the combined impact of the state and ignorance that they variously and unwittingly appear to provide support for dictatorship.

After thirty years of its existence, the post-colonial state is now undergoing a historical metamorphosis, the parameters of which are not yet clearly discernible. The question is whether out of this will emerge a new and dynamic *organisational framework* that will take into account the demands of the time, respond to the enormous economic problems that confront the African continent, and acknowledge that only a democratic future will provide at least the hope that our societies will survive into the year 2000. For even on the basis of nature alone, neither the personalities nor the philosophies that have characterised and buttressed the post-colonial state so far are likely to survive the 1990s. We have to prepare arduously for the future. It is essential that intellectuals continue at least to keep the debate open and vibrant, thereby making a modest contribution to the democratic process, helping to create that space through which mass organisations can be seen and heard, and eventually become again the central factor that they were in the struggle for National Liberation.

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## CHAPTER TWO

# THE CONTEXT OF THE DEMOCRACY DEBATE\*

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There has been a vigorous debate on the forms and content of 'democracy' in contemporary Zimbabwe. The debate still rages. It focusses on broad but interrelated themes: the arguments for and against the creation of a one-party state and the accountability of the political leadership to the masses, on the land question and on the new investment code and economic liberalisation programme, particularly its strictures on labour. The significance of this debate is that it indicates the emergence of a resilient democratic political culture. It also points to different strands of thought on these central issues whose resolution will contribute to the trajectory of Zimbabwean politics.

### THE ONE-PARTY STATE DEBATE

The debate on the one-party state began in the early 1980s and still continues. The context in which the debate emerged was one in which there were still unresolved differences between the two major parties, ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU, both of which had constituted the Patriotic Front before independence in 1980. In that context, the arguments for the creation of a one-party state posed a threat to the continued existence of ZAPU which won most seats in Matebeleland in the 1980 and 1985 general elections. However, the case for the one-party state has not been tied solely to the political objective of legislating the dissolution of ZAPU or, alternatively, its incorporation into ZANU-PF. The advocates of the one-party state have also reiterated familiar arguments about the need to achieve national unity ('a multi-party system is a luxury and a divisive structure in a developing society'). They point to certain African cases where the multi-party system had 'failed' and where opposition parties have been used as stooges by certain foreign powers. The advocates of the one-party system also frequently refer to an unspecified African tradition which encourages the settlement of political disputes through the mediation of the chief and extend this function to the dominant and sole political party. In summary, the arguments for the one-party system centre on its alleged superiority to

multi-party states (because it minimises inter-cine factionalism) and on its claimed value as an indispensable tool for national unity and the romanticisation of an African tradition for consensus. There is nothing original in these assumptions. The advocates of the one-party state have been rehearsing well-worn but, it must be suggested, questionable arguments.

The critique of the case for the one-party state has been based on several interrelated arguments. One is that, rather than legislate for a one-party state (as most African states have done), why not let it emerge as a result of political contest between freely competing parties? Nobody would question the legitimacy of a party which swept 100 percent of the seats on the basis of its electoral appeal.

This argument sought to shift the terms of the debate from the necessity for a legal fiat to introduce a one-party state to the need for a political test between parties. Prior to the Unity Accord of 1987, it was an argument which cast serious doubts over the ability of the ZANU-PF to win such an overwhelming victory as to displace PF-ZAPU's backing in its Matebeleland stronghold. There has been no adequate or convincing response from the advocates of the one-party state to this simple political test.

The second aspect of the critique of the one-party system has been its historical record. Certain states in Africa, cited as models of 'democratic' one-party systems in which internal opposition is or was encouraged, have been dismissed as irrelevant examples to Zimbabwe. Doubts have been expressed about the democratic basis of such a system; in any case, examples exist in those same countries of the suppression one form or another of opposition movements. Indeed, it is suggested there is nothing particularly inspiring about party machines which sustained leaders in office until death or *coup d'état*. Many of the assumptions about the presumed African tradition of settling internal problems through consensus are seen to be historically and empirically questionable. The authoritarianism which characterised one-party systems did not represent rule by consensus, it is argued.

The third aspect of the critique of the one-party system concerned the material imperatives which explain the desire within the ruling elite for a one-party state system. As one critic has argued:

In every society the dominant class interests have a stake in the existing arrangements of affairs and necessarily prefer the continuation and reproduction of existing arrangements. To ensure this, an institutional apparatus that conforms to and reinforces the existing arrangements is established.<sup>1</sup>

According to this argument, the one-party structure is a convenient device to perpetuate rule by a particular elite or coalition of interests. Periodic electoral tests in one-party state systems do not include the possibility of being unseated; no accounting for political and economic mistakes therefore occurs.

Finally, the critique of the one-party system accepts the arguments that a multi-party system does not necessarily imply the existence of democratic representation and social rights. But neither does it accept that this observation is a sufficient argument *against* a multi-party system and *for* a one-party system. If the existence of different class forces is accepted, then that of different political organisations to express those divergent interests should also be recognised.

This significance of the debate for Zimbabwean politics has been that the argument for the one-party state has been challenged even within certain sections of ZANU-PF itself. However, interestingly enough, there was some backing, provided certain conditions were met, for the idea from within the ZAPU opposition. The Unity Accord between ZANU and ZAPU in December 1987 was therefore expected to usher in the one-party system. However, the continued strength and convincing nature of the critique of the one-party system has kept the issue on the agenda. In the process, several developments, including the "Willowgate" car scandal which forced the resignation of at least five Cabinet Ministers, confirmed the serious doubts which existed about any trend towards autocratic tendencies where the party leadership was not accountable to the electorate on a regular basis.<sup>2</sup> The subsequent formation of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), a breakaway from ZANU-PF led by Edgar Tekere, and its capacity to mobilise about 30 percent of the votes in the Dzivaresekwa by-election in July 1989, further weakened the argument for a one-party state. The capacity of the newly formed ZUM (which campaigned on an anti-corruption ticket) to capture this significant proportion of the vote (in spite of formidable obstacles, such as lack of publicity in the state-controlled media and restrained access to facilities to address rallies) raised further serious doubts about the efficacy of the one-party state argument.

There does appear to exist a constituency of ZUM. It challenges the hegemony of the united ZANU party. It condemns the one-party concept as undemocratic and as a protective shield for corrupt elements within the political leadership. The significance of ZUM is that it represents an alternative political tendency formerly accommodated within ZANU. Edgar Tekere, ZUM's leader, was once the Party's Secretary-General, a Cabinet Minister and Provincial Chairman. His anti-corruption and

anti-authoritarian stance, both within and outside Parliament, inevitably brought on himself the wrath of the Party's senior leadership and ultimately led to his expulsion from ZANU in late 1988.

Yet there is nothing in ZUM's platform that makes it more radical or socialist than the party it seeks to discredit. The ideological position of ZUM is ambiguous and amorphous. It has sought to distance itself from the socialist rhetoric of ZANU. Whether its reading is that the prevailing cynicism about ZANU's socialist credentials would be a source of weakness if ZUM was seen to run on a socialist programme ticket, or whether it is an electoral ploy to be as populist as possible on a broad and vague platform is not clear. ZUM represents a threat to ZANU's electoral success because it feeds on several basic grievances which are widely shared after eleven years of independence. These include unfulfilled expectations symbolised by rising unemployment, a spiralling cost of living, land hunger and disillusionment with the tendencies towards self-enrichment and corruption by some sections of the political leadership.

ZUM presently articulates this disillusionment and cynicism; yet it also reflects aspirations for a cleaner government under a political leadership responsive to the masses. We have observed that it has no coherent ideology (save its aspersions against all 'isms') nor a political programme. This may yet prove to be its major weakness even if it may have broad short-term electoral appeal across the political spectrum. But it cannot continue to be 'all things to all men and women'. There is no guarantee that its broad-based populism will be more effective in achieving the material aspirations of the masses than did ZANU's socialist rhetoric.

However, the significance of ZUM lay more in changing the terms of the debate on the one-party system. It has shown that it can mobilise considerable electoral support, thus undermining the claim that the preconditions for a one-party system already exist in Zimbabwe. In spite of the enormous obstacles put in its way, it has posed a significant challenge to ZANU's hegemony and indeed to the argument for a one-party system. At the level of theoretical argument and political practice, it has been demonstrated that the one-party system is neither necessary nor inevitable.

In the 1990 general election campaign, the one-party state debate inevitably featured as one of the major issues in the tussle between ZANU-PF and ZUM. Although there was no detailed elaboration of how and when the ZANU-PF government would introduce the one-party state, the election statements by its leaders implied that the results would signify a mandate for its establishment.<sup>3</sup> Party leaders vigorously defended the case for the

one-party state. This provided ZUM with the political ammunition it needed to castigate ZANU-PF as seeking to construct an undemocratic and discredited political structure. ZUM argued that:

A multi-party facilitates the competition of ideas on public policy and on how society is going to achieve its goals. The one-party state tends to make leaders complacent because there is no opposition to fear.<sup>4</sup>

Thus on the one-party state question, ZUM occupied the democratic high ground and spoke the 'political language' of the 1990s in contrast to ZANU-PF's familiar but well-worn arguments drawn from the 1960s. Put on the defensive, ZANU-PF leaders would qualify their advocacy for the one-party state by stating that when it came it would not be imposed on Zimbabweans. The fallback position became that a referendum might have to be held on the one-party state issue.

As Makumbe's chapter in this volume shows, ZANU-PF won handsomely in contrast to ZUM's meagre two seats. Clearly, the election results demonstrated that it was not a single-issue election; those who won the argument for a multi-party system did not necessarily win the arguments and therefore carry the voters — on other election issues. At the same time, ZANU-PF's landslide victory was not a mandate for it to legislate a *de jure* one-party state. Indeed, the six months following the April election witnessed the intensification of the one-party state debate in many fora.

Here we may only briefly refer to two broad phases of the debate. In the first phase, when still flush with election victory, a section of the ZANU-PF leadership consistently pushed for the installation of a *de jure* one-party state. In May 1990, President Mugabe argued:

When you hear us talk about a one-party state . . . we are thinking purely that our family must be one. A one-party state system would give Zimbabwe greater space and greater democracy.<sup>5</sup>

The steps towards the establishment of the one-party state had begun with article six of the ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU unity agreement of 1987 which stated that "we shall seek to establish a one-party state". This article had been subsequently been incorporated into the ZANU-PF constitution and adopted at the unity congress in December 1990. President Mugabe's arguments became that only another congress could revise or annul this article on the one-party state.

During the second phase of the debate, it became quite clear that not only was there mounting opposition to the one party-state from various institutions in civil society (trade unions, churches, students, sections of the media and professional associations amongst others) but there were also substantial differences of opinion within the ZANU-PF leadership itself.



The references to unidentified "political cowards" and "ideological renegades" who had allegedly backtracked as a consequence of this mounting opposition pointed to those differences. As President Mugabe admitted:

In my own, sometimes solo, efforts to promote these policies which were clearly and resoundingly adopted by our national people's congress, I have noticed quite some reluctance on the part of the Central Committee members to openly enunciate them.<sup>6</sup>

This division of opinion on the one-party state would be subsequently more or less confirmed in newspaper leaks about polarisation of views on the same issue in the Politburo.<sup>7</sup>

The initial idea to establish a *de jure* one-party state had clearly become untenable by September 1990. This was acknowledged in the highest ranks of ZANU-PF itself. The combination of mounting opposition and wiser counsels within the party leadership influenced the outcome of this debate. ZANU-PF's fall-back position became that it would still work towards a one-party state; a *de facto* one-party state this time. Summing up the debate, Zimbabwe's elder statesman observed that:

The future for democracy in Zimbabwe hinges on the choice we make on this issue . . . I argue for the retention of the status quo because I believe that no generation has the right to make immutable decisions for future generations, which is what *de jure* one-party state does.<sup>8</sup>

The rescinding of the original idea for a one-party state is a realistic response to public opposition and internal party debate. The 'Zimbabwe debate' on this question demonstrates not only the existence of democratic space which needs to be constantly struggled for but also the efficacy of the confluence of solid opposition to an undemocratic model from within civil society and sections of ZANU-PF itself.

## ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The second major area of debate has focussed on the accountability of the political leadership to the masses. This has been an on-going issue since 1980 and relates to the Leadership Code drafted in 1984. This is a code of conduct — relating to limits on the acquisition of wealth which the political leadership is expected to abide by. It prohibits party leaders (Central Committee, provincial, district and branch leaders) and government leaders (from ministers to civil servants) from receiving more than one salary, income from rented property, owning more than 50 acres of agricultural land and establishing business as avenues of accumulation. The need to draw up a Leadership Code was itself an admission of the propensity of some of the party and government leadership to utilise its power and

influence to accumulate wealth. There was nothing unnatural about the growth of such tendencies towards capitalist accumulation amongst the petit or nascent bourgeoisie. The naive assumption was that the Leadership Code would succeed in nipping in the bud such tendencies where it failed in such states as Tanzania and Zambia. At the same time, nevertheless, the appearance of the Code dovetailed with the expressed socialist objectives of the government and reflected the disquiet of the masses over acquisitive tendencies amongst some leaders soon after independence.

Significantly, the debate over the accountability of leaders never questioned the need for a Leadership Code. Even acquisitive leaders did not argue publicly against it. It was a Party instrument to limit rampant corruption and aggressive accumulation by this emergent bourgeoisie. However, it is also generally clear that the Code was never taken seriously by some of the leadership. It was a weak, if not toothless instrument. The observation was made that:

The demands that were being made on the leadership in terms of the Leadership Code remained essentially on the moralistic level and excluded, at least by implication, all those who were not leaders in the party. There was, therefore, no real structural challenge to the capitalist system as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

A great deal of 'voluntarism' on the part of the leaders was assumed, somewhat naively. In reality, only a few leaders adhered faithfully to the precepts of the Code. In 1987 and particularly in 1988, criticism of some leaders' appetite for accumulation reached a new crescendo. University students demonstrated against 'corruption in high places'. Inside and outside Parliament, Tekere denounced the graft and abuse of office by certain leaders.

The 'Willowgate' car scandal in which several Cabinet Ministers were implicated involved the misuse of office in acquiring cars which were then resold at higher prices. It was a clear case of profiteering from the sale of the famous "Toyota Cressidas". However, the findings of the Sandura Commission, which probed the scandal, raised additional issues apart from the motive of profiteering by unscrupulous political leaders. Firstly, it underlined some of the limitations of state-owned companies (of which Willowvale plant is one): they can be vulnerable to pressure from politicians. Their efficiency and allocation system become compromised in the process. Secondly, the shortage of cars provided the context in which some powerful politicians profiteered by selling vehicles at prices above the controlled prices. The removal of such shortages may well be the long-term solution. As the Sandura Commission observed:

It is necessary to make available a far larger allocation of foreign currency than is granted at present for the importation of motor vehicle kits and spares.<sup>10</sup>

Thus the roots of the "Willowgate" scandal should be sought not only in the greed of certain politicians but also in the shortages which put a premium on the cars. The recurrence of such greed and profiteering in other shortage areas cannot be discounted in future.

Thirdly, the findings of the Commission showed the growing web of ties between some politicians and the business class. The latter also includes individual white and Asian businessmen, multinational and local companies. These were all involved in the corruption-based profiteering which occurred either over lending money to the politicians concerned or over the their purchase of the ill-gotten cars. The web of corruption was indicative of the emergent post-independence political economy. While the scandal tainted the politicians concerned in spectacular fashion, the other accomplices within the bourgeoisie and their abatement of corruption should not be overlooked.

Finally, the Commission's conclusions confirmed fully the fears and suspicions which the masses and students had expressed about the acquisitive practices of politicians in recent years. It was a case of 'we told you so'. The huge crowds at the Commission's public hearings, to which the politicians (Cabinet Ministers) were summoned to testify, was a rare spectacle of democracy. The legal overtones of the hearings did not dampen their political significance: the masses could express publicly their contempt at the corruption and profiteering by some ministers. Even the arrogance displayed towards them and immortalised in the famous retort by one defendant, 'one fool at a time', to refer to the people in the public gallery, could no longer obscure the fact that the politicians did indeed need to account for their misdeeds. The authoritarianism couched in arrogant mannerisms no longer sufficed. One minister would later be reminded of his oft-quoted remark: 'Who is this little Nyarota', in reference to the newspaper editor who first broke the "Willowgate" story. The subsequent debate as to whether or not the ministers should be acquitted on perjury charges also reflected concern at the use of presidential powers.

We have referred to two debates and events which illustrate the desire for democratic structures and practices which encourage, rather than inhibit, the expression of different political tendencies and accountability of politicians to the electorate. There are two other debates in contemporary Zimbabwe which relate not so much to the form of 'democracy' but rather to its substantive content. These concern the land question and the recently introduced Investment Code and economic liberalisation programme

## THE LAND QUESTION

The debate on the land question was infused with greater urgency in the run-up to the scrapping of the Lancaster House Constitution and the general election of 1990. Although the land issue has not been ignored in political discussion during the past ten years, there has been an awareness that prior to the abrogation of the Lancaster constitution there were limits to possibilities for a broad agrarian reform programme. The debate has therefore simmered for a long time rather than being as intense and emotional as it has now become. In the first few years of independence, the resettlement programme for displaced and landless peasants was the centre-piece of agrarian reform. Although it had been premised on the resettlement of 162,000 of them, only 52,000 have been provided with land to date. The major obstacles to the programme have been financial and logistical.

The resettlement programme has its critics even now: white MPs in Parliament, some fractions of the bureaucracy, the agrarian bourgeoisie and the more privileged strata within the peasantry (the master farmers). Yet the programme also has supporters within ZANU, some sections of the bureaucracy and amongst the peasantry. These contending interests have differed over whether or not more land, especially under-utilised land from the settler sector, should be redistributed amongst the peasants in increasingly land-short communal areas (CAs). Much of the argument during the early 1980s was about whether or not such redistribution would lead to the collapse of production in the capitalist agrarian sector. Such a collapse, it was argued, would undermine food security and undercut the foreign exchange earning capacity of the sector. This was the major argument of the agrarian bourgeois lobby and its intellectual and political supporters. However, it proved an unconvincing (and therefore, politically weak) position because there is a significant amount of under-utilisation of land in the capitalist agrarian sector. Careful redistribution of land could occur without touching the productive parts of the farms and estates and therefore without undermining output and the resultant foreign exchange earnings. More significantly, however, peasant output of food and cash crops such as cotton, enjoyed a manifold increase after independence. The argument against land redistribution because of fears over food security proved groundless. Maize yields rose sharply and peasant cotton and coffee have become significant foreign exchange earners.

The point here is that the terms of the debate over the land question have shifted significantly since the early post-independence years. The argument is no longer whether more land should be redistributed amongst the

peasantry. Even the agrarian bourgeoisie agree that there should be such redistribution. The current debate focusses on the terms and magnitude of such redistribution. This is the context in which the amending of the Lancaster House constitution which laid down stringent conditions for the purchase of land from the capitalist sector is being discussed.

Several strands in the current debate can be identified. The first takes a radical position which stipulates that, in view of the growing land-hunger amongst the peasantry, the government should redistribute under-utilised land whether or not the land owners concur. The opening salvoes in this debate were fired — and significantly so — by Senior Minister Nkomo and President Mugabe. What partly explains the renewed emphasis on agrarian reform via land redistribution was the general election in 1990. Peasant grievances over land have not been resolved. The veiled warnings to the agrarian bourgeoisie to make available more land for the peasants is presumably aimed at 'softening' them up but also to deflect popular pressures for significant land redistribution. The demands by the leaders for more land for the peasantry are often qualified by the disclaimer that the state does not intend to grab land from the bourgeoisie.

The agrarian bourgeoisie no longer argues against land redistribution but stresses the problems the government has had in resettling peasants. A favourite argument is that some of the land bought by government has not yet been utilised for resettlement. It turns out that most of this land is located in agro-ecologically unsuitable parts of the country. In some ways, it is a rearguard argument. However, this agrarian bourgeois lobby should not be underestimated. Nor is it without support amongst Western countries, including Britain, and international financial and donor agencies.

Yet another strand within the debate observes that an emergent black bourgeoisie now has a vested interest in the existing status quo in land ownership. This bourgeoisie has been a major beneficiary of the stymied land redistribution programme. It has become a land-owning class and has no intention of giving up that ownership nor of supporting a significant redistribution amongst the peasantry. There would then be few differences if any with the established white agrarian bourgeoisie. Significantly, some of this emergent bourgeoisie includes government ministers and politicians. A representative of this critique is Tekere who has argued that:

Too many farms are already owned by too few chiefs (top government officials). He (Dr Nkomo) should start in Cabinet, at party leadership meetings, to begin reversing the trend that was set in motion in 1980, before he goes to the commercial farmers.<sup>11</sup>

This argument, of course, plays into the hands of the agrarian bourgeoisie. Yet it would also reflect and explain the cynicism amongst the peasantry with respect to the commitment of the political leadership to making significant agrarian reforms. Indeed, an element conspicuously missing from this debate over land is the peasantry which stands silently in the wings. This reflects its organisational weakness. The National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ) which represents the richer peasantry forcefully argues the case of the allocation of more land to its 'master farmer' members. Yet the muted silence of the peasants must not be confused with their restiveness and frustration over land; squatting continues.

Missing too from the debate on the land question is a discussion of the concrete features which the reform should involve and the question of the unfolding social relations amongst the peasantry. The question of social differentiation and its contradictory character are absent from the agenda. On the political level, though, the emergence of a black commercial agrarian and small-scale agrarian bourgeoisie (not to speak of the upper peasant stratum) has received expression in their respective contributions to the debate. At the theoretical level, the divergent interests of these classes (and their contradictory implications) require future evaluation. This debate has relevance for understanding the democratic content or otherwise of agrarian reform in contemporary Zimbabwe.

By the second half of 1990, however, a combination of pressures ensured that ZANU-PF had to define more clearly what its land policy for the 1990s will be. Amendments were to be made to the existing land legislation. First, the Lancaster House Constitution provisions relating to land were to be amended to enable the government to appropriate land and to compensate the owners in local currency as against the previous stipulation which required payment in foreign currency.<sup>12</sup> Second, the Land Acquisition Act of 1985 would be amended to enable the government to acquire land for resettlement on a planned basis. About 5 million hectares, on which to resettle 110,000 families to reach the original total of 162,000 first calculated eight years ago, would need to be acquired by the government. Third, the government intended to control agricultural land prices with prices fixed at realistic average price per hectare by natural region and with the addition of the value of permanent improvements.<sup>13</sup> Fourth, the government would impose land tax on the large-scale commercial farms to encourage "the proper utilisation of land and also to avoid the bad habit of people who just buy and own land for speculative purposes".<sup>14</sup> Fifth, the government would legislate against the ownership of more than one farm

by an individual or company except in cases where exemptions were justifiable. Absentee landlords would not own land except where the government was convinced that adequate management had been provided and the land was not being under-utilised. Sixth, the government had decided to change the current settler selection system to give more emphasis to master farmers or farmers with potential to fully utilise land. It has been argued that:

The land area of Zimbabwe is limited and we cannot afford to under-utilise this valuable natural resources with impunity. The time has now come to put people in land who can till it properly.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the government decided to promote emergent black large-scale commercial farmers ostensibly to ensure continuity in production as well as the establishment of 'a more balanced' racial composition of the large-scale agrarian bourgeoisie. To facilitate this process, the government intended to identify a cadre of potential black large-scale commercial farmers and to design appropriate financial and training programmes to ensure that this bourgeois class succeeded.<sup>16</sup>

This brief summary of the 'new' land policy does not exhaust the broad range of other issues which it seeks to resolve. However, it suffices in showing that a comprehensive agrarian reform is currently not on the government's agenda.<sup>17</sup> There will be exemptions with respect to ownership of more than one farm by individual farmers or companies and ownership by absentee landlords. The resettlement programme and its target of 162,000 peasant families is more than five years behind schedule. Furthermore, the beneficiaries of the new settler system will be the better-endowed peasant producers, the master farmers who are transforming into 'rich peasants', if not into a small-scale agrarian bourgeoisie. Together with the envisaged emergent black agrarian bourgeoisie, they (and not the poor and some middle peasants) stand to gain from the enunciated land policy. Instead of encouraging a broad democratic public debate on the land question, the government intends to appoint a commission of land tenure experts to review the existing land tenure system. The peasant class — to which access to land has now become even more critical than at any other period in Zimbabwe's agrarian history — is unlikely to wield the necessary influence to tilt both that commission and the state in favour of its material interests. Overall, the post-Lancaster House land policy reflects a 'top-down' rather a 'bottom-up' democratic approach to the question of land redistribution and utilisation. Agrarian reform should be democratised.

## THE INVESTMENT CODE, ECONOMIC LIBERALISATION AND LABOUR CONDITIONS

The fourth area of the interesting debate in Zimbabwe concerns the recently introduced Investment Code and its implications for national economic control and labour conditions. The pressure for the drawing up of a code which sets out liberal conditions for foreign investors has been building up during the past few years. Indeed, such international financial institutions as the World Bank and the IMF, have been pushing for even greater liberalisation than that envisaged by the Code. However, the significance of the Code relates to an awareness that few foreign companies have invested in post-independence Zimbabwe. In spite of the government's lukewarm commitment to socialism, it has not been terribly enthusiastic about liberalising conditions for foreign investors. The economic nationalism within the government and the bureaucracy should not be underestimated.

However, the structural constraints under which the economy operates have influenced the debate in terms of the desirability of foreign investment. The current shortages of investment funds and foreign exchange and growing unemployment impose difficult choices on the government, despite its concern about the costs of foreign investment. In addition, external pressure forced the government to become a member of the Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and to work towards 'mutually satisfactory terms embodied in bilateral investment treaties with those governments whose nationals are likely to invest in Zimbabwe'.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, there was in the Code an argument that price and income controls had contributed to the high level of unemployment. Government became conscious of the concerns of investors in relation to constraints imposed on enterprises by the operation of these controls and further recognised the need for 'a more rational' and 'market-oriented method' of determining prices and incomes.<sup>19</sup> The relaxation of these controls has sparked criticism from unions and students. They argue that the deregulation of prices and labour conditions will hit the working class harder than any other class. Let us examine more closely the different strands in this debate. The first, espoused by unions and students, argues that:

the Code represents both "capitulation" and the "growing contradiction" within the state. It continues to pronounce socialism as the ultimate objective yet it made it more difficult than ever to attain it.<sup>20</sup>

It also stressed that the workers' rights would be adversely affected by the implementation of the Code. The labour congress has warned that:



the workers' position hangs precariously, particularly in view of the implicit strategy to liberalise the process of wage determination.<sup>21</sup>

Similar fears are expressed over the greater flexibility which the Code imparts to investors with respect to current labour regulations dealing with the termination of employment. The overall critique contained in this strand of the debate concerns the likely erosion of the democratic rights of workers to employment security and minimum wages. The relevance of the debate on the Code to the discussion on democracy lies precisely in the context of existing democratic rights which will be vulnerable if existing labour laws are revised.

The position of the Investment Code was a forerunner to the trade liberalisation programme unveiled in July 1990 and which began to be implemented in October 1990. The terms of this economic liberalisation programme (which encompassed much more than trade issues) were similarly contested by different social interests. We can review only briefly the major components of the liberalisation programme. First, this phased and selective programme was aimed at stimulating economic activity and achieving a sustainable growth rate of 5 percent over the next five years. Second, as an aspect of the liberalisation/structural adjustment programme, the government intended to gradually phase out regulatory mechanisms on employment conditions, incomes, prices and foreign exchange allegedly because "they had served their purpose".<sup>22</sup> Third, during the transition, imports would be progressively placed under the Open General Import Licence (OGIL) and measures implemented to modernise the domestic productive capacity, preparing producers for external competition and orienting their activities towards exporting. Fourth, it was admitted that the structural adjustment programmes were often accompanied by the immiseration of vulnerable segments of society.<sup>23</sup> With market forces determining price levels, "in the short-term prices are bound to increase beyond the reach of the poor and this can lead to social unrest".<sup>24</sup>

The implementation of the economic liberalisation package has already led to severe belt-tightening by lower income groups as prices of most commodities have been deregulated and so have increased. A case of grave anxiety to the working class were the envisaged amendments to the Labour Relations Act to restore to employers the right "to hire and fire" workers. Typical of the statements encapsulating the insecurity engendered by the deregulation of labour controls pertaining to job security was that:

With the coming cut-through competition, women doing unskilled work would be the first targets to retrenchment. Companies trying to have an edge of the competitors would want to have more skilled manpower and less of the general hand.<sup>25</sup>

But related anxieties were also shared by the emergent small black business class which argued that it would not benefit from the liberalisation programme because it would be unable compete with established companies and to sustain the removal of price and rent controls.<sup>26</sup>

There is a general convergence of opinion in government and the affected social groups that the implementation of the structural adjustment measures (however euphemistically termed as they may be as 'trade liberalisation') will be painful. It is also clear that the formulation process of the programme itself excluded the participation of working class and peasants organisations and other vulnerable segments of society. In other developing countries, this top-down imposition of these painful adjustment programmes resulted in resistance in the form of demonstrations, strikes and riots by these groups. The democratic participation of these social groups in the formulation and implementation of these programmes is long overdue.<sup>27</sup> Such participation may lead to a less inequitable sharing of the pain, provide more legitimacy to the programmes and to the government. Finally, exogenous factors such as the Gulf Crisis which erupted with Iraq's annexation of Kuwait in August 1990, represent important determinants in the trajectory of the liberalisation programme. It is already uncertain whether, as a consequence of the steep increase of the oil prices, the original programme can still be kept on course.

A second strand to the debate on economic liberalisation argues for the need for realism and adjustment in attitudes both to structural adjustment, foreign investment and the de-regulation of controls over wages and prices. The proponents of this perspective argue that unless such a readjustment occurs, Zimbabwe will continue to be less than attractive to foreign capital; the economy will therefore continue to grow at a sluggish pace, and unemployment will reach graver proportions. Concessions to foreign capital need not necessarily be a zero-sum game and Zimbabwe will benefit from an expanding economy fuelled by infusions of foreign capital. According to this argument, there will be increased employment opportunities; the local bourgeoisie will grow and national control over the economy need not be necessarily curtailed due to foreign investment. The proponents of economic liberalisation go further to argue for the privatisation of state-owned enterprises (parastatals), the elimination of bureaucratic red-tape, and more generally, of state control over the economy. Democratic participation by other social groups — workers, peasants and potential associations — besides the bourgeoisie in the formulation and implementation of the economic liberalisation package is excluded in this perspective. The influence of this 'line' on liberalisation is particularly

strong within the business federations (Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries and Commercial Farmers' Union amongst others) but also extends to some (but not all) government ministries.

These contrasting views have given rise to a heated debate as we have already observed above. In 1989, on one of the radio channels, the critique of the Investment Code articulated by one university teacher, Kempton Makamure, led to his detention for a few days and the suspension of the broadcasters who interviewed him. Elsewhere in this volume, Ncube discusses the background to university students' criticism of corrupt political figures and events leading to the temporary closure of the institution in October 1989. The detention and subsequent acquittal of the student leader and that of Morgan Tsvangirai, the Secretary-General of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, underscored the tensions that had developed over the heavy-handed state response to the critique of corruption and economic policy.

The opprobrium heaped by some government leaders on university students for their criticism underlined the sensitivity and uneasiness which the debate had generated. Criticisms that government was trampling on the individual rights of the concerned journalists, students, lecturer and trade unionist also came from within ZANU-PF itself, the churches, university teachers, students and the press. A ZANU-PF parliamentarian, for example, argued that:

I take this view that my own liberties and freedom are safe as long as my neighbours' are. We are our brother's keepers just as much as our brothers are also keepers in issues of our liberties, freedom of the press, right to inform and the right to be informed and the right of free speech. Individuals should not be detained at the whim of an individual person.<sup>28</sup>

Thus the question of democratic rights — including the freedom to criticise the government — is clearly perceived not to be a bourgeoisie luxury but as fundamental to the democratic process. Hence the jealous guarding of any possible erosion by government or other state institutions of such rights.

## CONCLUSION

This survey of the debate on the one-party state, on the land question and economic liberalisation has shown how contested the definition of 'democracy' and the democratic content of social rights are in Zimbabwe. Certainly the monopoly of the state and the ruling ZANU-PF party in defining these rights has been challenged on key issues. The existence of a civil society whose institutions periodically question the hegemony of the

state on specific questions relating to democracy is an important insurance against an unmitigated slide into authoritarianism and autocracy.

The apparent *volte-face* by the ZANU-PF leadership in September 1990 on the establishment of a *de jure* one-party state bespeaks the strength, cogency and popular dimensions of the critique of the one-party state concept by civil society institutions. It also reflects the democratic space which exists in contemporary Zimbabwe. This space is a national asset which requires careful nurturing and stalwart defence.

## FOOTNOTES

1. *Moto*, May 1984.
2. The term 'Willowgate scandal' derives from the Willowvale car plant in which the state has a stake in terms of ownership and from which vehicles were bought by some politicians, civil servants and business figures who then resold them at much higher prices.
3. L. M. Sachikonye, "The 1990 Zimbabwe Elections: A Post-mortem", *Review of African Political Economy*, 48, 1990.
4. Zimbabwe Unity Movement, ZUM Election Manifesto: Towards a Democratic Zimbabwe, Harare, 1990.
5. Quoted in *The Herald*, 9 May 1990.
6. Quoted in *The Herald*, 30 June 1990.
7. See, for example, *The Financial Gazette* of 10 August 1990.
8. C. Banana, "Zimbabwe: The Past Ten Years and the Future of Democracy". Paper presented to the *Monthly Forum* of the Zimbabwe Chapter of the African Association of Political Science (AAPS), September, 1990.
9. I. Mandaza (ed.), *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition 1980-1986*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 1986.
10. Zimbabwe Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Distribution of Motor Vehicles*, The Sandura Report, under the Chairmanship of Justice Sandura, Harare, 1989.
11. Quoted in *The Financial Gazette*, 21 July 1989.
12. W. Mangwende, Statement on New Land Policy to the House of Assembly, *The Financial Gazette*, 3 August, 1990.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*

17. See, for example, S. Moyo and T. Skalnaes, "Zimbabwe's Land Reform and Development Strategy: State Autonomy, Class Bias and Economic Rationality", Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies, Research Paper No. 3; and R. Palmer, "Land Reform in Zimbabwe 1890-1990", *African Affairs*, 89.
18. Zimbabwe Government, *The Promotion of Investment: Policy Regulations*, Harare.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, *ZCTU on the New Investment Code: Its Implications to National Independence and to the Position and Condition of Working People*, Harare.
21. *Ibid.*
22. B. Chidzero, 'Trade Liberalisation Outlined', quoted in *The Financial Gazette*, 27 July, 1990.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. M. Pswarayi, "Trade Liberalisation Brings Misery", *The Sunday Mail*, 14 October 1990.
26. See *The Sunday Mail* of 7 October, 1990
27. G. Kanyenze, "Liberalisation: Some Reflections", mimeo, 1990.
28. See the *Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, 1989.

## CHAPTER THREE

# INTOLERANCE: THE BANE OF AFRICAN RULERS

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Musaemura B. Zimunya

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One of the biggest hurdles to African progress, apart from the overquoted colonial legacy and international capitalist conspiracy, is that Africans are overgoverned by punch-drunk fat generals and petty-minded dictators obsessed with visions of eternal rule, for good or for bad. In this case, African governments are not content with just running the affairs of the State and providing their people with the necessities of life, but would also run the very lives and control the thinking of the citizens they govern. And yet, ironically, this was the cornerstone of colonial oppression: to smash any deviant thinking of the natives by whip, gun or shackle.

One of the most effective ways by which African governments have achieved this state of affairs has been blackmail and suppression of all criticisms and information designed to expose the fallacy of their policies and crimes of their league. Thus before the people realise, their hard-won *uhuru* spawns one tyrant after another, preying on the original commitment of the masses. All the leaders become demi-gods of wrath. All critics inside or outside the party or government are crushed! To agree with everything the leaders say is divine, but to disagree is treason.

The mass media, that is, daily newspapers, radio and television, are largely controlled by chiefs, resulting in all criticisms, even the mildest, being automatically banned or censored, lest our demi-gods be found to be sinful little ogres. Furthermore, critics are intimidated, as in the case of Geoffrey Nyarota who must have been sent cowering when Enos Nkala (in 1988) threatened to send a brigade to the *Chronicle* newspaper's office to put him in his place, or Masvingo journalists who some of the town councillors tried to silence (in 1990) after exposing the housing stands allocation scandal. Thus, critics and citizens, those rumour-mongering citizens, can be intimidated by mobilised crowds or state intelligence officers, or harassed by one arm of the law or other, not to mention verbal threats from chiefs themselves. Mark Dube and the *Chronicle* reporter (in 1988) or Witness Mangwende and the *Moto* reporter in Chitungwiza (in 1989) are cases in point.

In due course, the phrases "constructive criticism" and "destructive criticism" were coined in order to place potential opponents or "enemies" in some useful categories to reward the loyalists and punish "malcontents". The citizen must belong to them or be condemned. The sponsors of the dialectic are not ashamed to attribute enmity where it may not exist. They thrive on the explosive emotions which this dialectic is likely to generate among the unsuspecting women and idle youths of low literacy. In fact, no regard is ever had for the patriotism of critics, unless they happen to die, like Willie Musarurwa, who was disgraced, sacked as the *Sunday Mail* editor and allowed to live a life, which for a man who had fought so much for the liberation of Zimbabwe, was equivalent to scrounging. On his death, tents went up and our villain was buried at the Heroes' Acre!

This is so because ruling African parties consider themselves as the government and government as the state. The party, government and their leaders become as sacred as the state. Any denigration of these institutions and their leaders is tantamount to high treason. You may be punished by stoning, harassment, detention or jail.

Very few African leaders — if at all there are any — however educated or intelligent they may appear to be in their kentes or three-piece pin-stripe suits or Chairman Mao outfits, can differentiate between a critic and a traitor. Where there is a critic they see a traitor. In most cases they see no difference between a civilian intellectual seeking to exercise his freedom of expression and a rabid political opponent who not only has arms cached away but also has thousands of troops in a neighbouring country awaiting an opportune moment.

In popular philosophy they say, "That is the way of Africa". That is, tyrannical rulers and an uncritical people. No one ever asks whether they have heard it said, "That is the way of Europe or America".

In any case, most people will not remember that Africans fought with strikes, demonstrations and even arrows and guns in order to bury the insult that says the African is not yet civilised enough to have a vote and rule himself. Ian Smith had a chorus like that, even if it was so that he could also oppress for 'a thousand years' to come.

Still, how do Africa's rulers measure themselves against their colonial rulers? What does the terror of Idi Amin, Bokassa, Siad Barre and many others, say of our own humanism? Ask this question and you are labelled "destructive" and mentally colonised.

But, what do the phrases "constructive criticism" and "destructive criticism" mean anyway? A keen look at those who use these phrases will invariably show that they get intensely paranoid when they hear criticism. They are so weakly constituted that they fear that if they are criticised they will lose their manliness, their constituencies and ultimately, their power. "Constructive criticism" means flattery, agreement and praise of the chef.

Criticism *per se* is non-existent. Anything else is destructive. Opposition is an expression of hate, not pure disagreement. It is as though the critic had the power of the *n'anga* who can pierce your photograph with a needle and so effect your death.

Again the people will say, "This is Africa", meaning to say that we are incapable of being criticised without feeling rancoured about it. In fact, all the time the impression given is that to criticise is to condemn or curse in the biblical fashion. And yet, strangely, we should know better since our whole independence struggle arose out of critical awareness of the evils of colonialism and imperialism. In those days we condemned the bible, the settler gun and capital. Of course, we have not forgotten those evils and never will. Hence, whenever an opposition party emerges, the first instinct of African leaders is to smear it with the filth of colonialism and capitalism — however greedy the leaders themselves may be. Every domestic crisis, however self-created, will eventually be blamed on the foreigners and the "enemy within" — the critics.

Here is the truth about our African leaders. Even the most bloodthirsty tyrant will require both the domestic and the foreign press to kneel down and praise their glorious leadership and ignore their heinous deeds. The self-righteousness of our heroes is truly embarrassing!

It is quite true that acceptance of criticism implies the highest respect for human ideal, and that its denial suggests a conscious or unconscious lack of humanity on our part. Intolerance must surely rank as one of the worst forms of immorality in human affairs. We can see the horror of this in people who go out of their way to organise violence or murder someone who belongs to another party. The kind of violence which has maimed Patrick Kombayi of Gweru for life, for daring to stand against Vice-President Simon Muzenda in the 1990 elections ought to make those who boast of their right to stay in power forever ponder over MNR terrorists cutting the ears, lips and genitals of honest citizens in Mozambique. A sub-culture of blood is nursed with speeches at rallies endlessly.

What I am striving to say is that African nations should take pride in their critics, whether they are conservative, Marxist or anarchist. Until we can



allow our people the fullest and unencumbered expression in art, writing, sport and politics, we are in danger of teaching them a very simplified version of this complex universe. A society without critics is a human hell where leaders indulge their anarchical instincts without moral compunction. They will siphon the wealth of the land and deposit it in foreign vaults.

Our society has very few thinkers. History always tells us the greatest nations respected their thinkers. True, tyrants all over the world and throughout history have always been terrified of men of ideas, but ultimately more tolerant societies parted ways with their politicians and endorsed the contributions of their geniuses. When our future generations ask themselves who the greatest thinkers were at this stage of our history, what will they find? I am afraid they may come up with none. If they should see an amorphous mass of mediocrity ruled by fear of being thought different and in so doing subversive, it should not surprise us. It is because we only have time to chase after the litter material gleam there is left from the colonial table — farms and bottle stores — and to condemn the goddamned imperialists and nothing else.

When people say that it is alien to our culture or custom or tradition to criticise leaders, they forget that in our traditional past even chiefs or kings were the subject of satirical orations, through poetry and ribaldry. Even the ruthless Zulu dictator, Chaka, could be criticised openly. Now, try and criticise the president of this country or any other and see what happens to you in the newspapers, on radio and television. And yet we are so fond of justifying one-party rule on our ancestral traditions! So, on the one hand we proclaim that we are progressive socialists, not feudalists (the logic of ancestral dictatorship) and yet we do not know what the real Africans who lived before us practised! This, we say, in the mistaken belief that it is alien — Western — to have freedom of expression and criticism.

So we are really stuck in a culture of zealous worship of leaders, a culture which would look primitive in the eyes of Shona ancestors. Our modern African societies have established a reputation for intolerance that is difficult to match. To date, people are dissuaded from criticism in several ways. First, the rulers make loud pronouncements against critics and criticism — traitors and treason, in their eyes. Should this fail, African leaders resort to harassment and intimidation. Harassment takes many forms, the most common ones being raiding the house of the supposed enemy, trailing him, detaining him without providing reasons for it, to mention a few.

In imprisonment, Africa will ever be 'thankful' to the white man for this most expedient means of silencing criticism. There are so many kinds of this form of punishment that it would be tedious to mention. A few of them include gaol, detention, house arrest, restriction, and remand. All these suppress criticism. "Of course, what did you expect, this is Africa?": someone will confidently and conveniently assert. And yet, the traditional society would never have dreamt of all this repressive culture!

Our heirs will find rather a toiling and sweating horde of malicious rhetoricians, people fondly enslaved to hollow jargon which speech writers willingly provide. As for the leaders themselves, our heirs will only remember the brutal energy with which they went on to grab former settler farms and the haste with which they leaped over the socialist manifesto and became wealthy overnight, complete with foreign accounts bursting with currency scarcely available at home. A grave paucity of vision and an obsession with electoral violence against the opposition and innocent householders will be remembered as evidence of our 'proud' civilisation.

This is the legacy of post-colonial African power politics all over the continent. No one will ever be embarrassed on our behalf except the familiar hypocritical liberals. They will also agree that we love our speeches written in English by university graduates and delivered in emotional and passionate tones at rallies to baby-suckling women who never went beyond the educational stage of writing letters in Shona.

The vital question is "Where are our intellectuals?" Well, they are here, there and everywhere galore, though they have humbled their profession to save their precious skins or are buried in bureaucracies, having surrendered their intellect to the goddess of prestige and power. They have been hammered to dust and pulp by dogmatists and anti-criticists who believe that the first step to revolutionary progress is to crush and destroy scholars and intellectuals of every sort. They pride themselves in the power they got from women, workers and peasants and arrogantly dismiss the value of the intellectual in the scheme of the future.

Here, there is a mistaken notion that the "brawn class" rather than the "brain class" will rule the future of mankind, not the latter, nor a combined force of the two. Despite all the omens, like the size of the urban vote during the 1990 General Elections, our leaders, relying on the might at their disposal, believe in themselves and the uprightness of their vision only. These same people who believe in the "brawn class" are furiously educating their children so that they can take charge of the future of this world. A blissfully contradictory calculation which overlooks the question of what

kind of world we will bequeath to our heirs. For it is a pity that the same people who are sending their children to private schools and overseas should lull the peasants and workers into sleep by shouting against intellectuals.

Yet history tells us that the greatest epochs in mankind's weary journey are characterised, not by subjugation of the intellect nor downgrading of thinkers and critics. On the contrary, the Greeks gave us Herodotus, the historian, Hippocrates, the doctor and Homer, the poet. Go to Rome, and see what democracy produced in the arts and sciences. Move to more recent times and see the Renaissance or the French Revolution. Ironically, we take the greatest pleasure in admiring these eras and forget that the one real challenge they offer us perpetually is the development of sound minds, not the destruction of reason and intellect for the mistaken fear of losing power.

Africans have picked up one ideology after another — a good thing. However, no one African leader has sought to marry his borrowed ideology with the political, social and moral ideologies of his ancestors. From their ancestors, they borrow convenient clichés, not the substance, to bolster their eternal hunger for power, while from foreign countries they borrow a dry programme, useful only to win an election. There is no place for intellectuals in this scheme, for too many questioners spoil the party.

Africa has certainly not learnt from history. Name a single country that does not harass its budding intellectuals, writers, journalists, philosophers of integrity. Name a single leader who has had the courage to grant intellectuals a place in the *avante-garde*. Even the arguably greatest African intellectual leader, Senghor, turned out to be a ruthless oppressor of intellectuals and champions of freedom. Where is Ngugi? Sembene Ousmane? Jack Mapanje? *et cetera*. Shamefully, all over Africa, leaders are anxious to reduce all people to an obsequious mass: oppressed, mutilated, hungry and terrified. A continent of weeping.

Until African politicians redress the imbalance between selfish pursuit of power and concern for the human lives they are elected to protect, between arrogance and self-respect and humility, between intolerance and mutual tolerance, Africa will forever be marching backwards in very long strides.

What is distinctly lacking among our leaders in our "civilised" societies is a culture of tolerance and humility which places the humanity of others before self and accepts that all citizens have a right to participate in the shaping of their destiny directly without fear of reprisal. Intolerance belies the fact that our pre-colonial societies had evolved this quality to a degree which make us look like veritable primitives fit only to be seen in leopard skins and not kentes, three-piece pin-stripe suits, safaris or Chairman Mao

outfits. If you are in doubt, attend any burial ritual or chief's court or family get-together and observe how every child, every fool, and every lord is governed by a sophisticated system of human interaction which accords every opinion a hearing, every human being a place in the ritual line. My memory of my chief's court from days of my youth is of an occasion that was dominated, not by the chief, but by many councillors and common people waiting for their turn to throw in a question or a view to establish the guilty party. Our modern leaders are everywhere the trouble-shooters.

Tolerance and respect for our fellow citizens makes us allow our critics to express their opinion about our views without inhibition, whether these seem to be unpalatable or not. At the same time we expect the same treatment or privilege when our turn comes. This is not something we achieve instinctively. Rather, we develop it consciously and respectfully. For, our very instincts would drive us to throttling our opponents in argument, or, better still, smack them with a deadly blow. This is familiar to all those who have seen the manner in which ZANU-PF youths have gone on the rampage in the General Elections of 1985 and 1990.

Yet it is a tribute to our African intellectuals that they have found the emotional and spiritual resources to challenge their almighty systems at the risk of every known horror. Thus the one-party state debate rages on unabated by every threat. The arguments for the one-party state are simple, because African leaders are not known for any philosophical complexity. They are pragmatic where their stomachs and bank accounts are concerned. Multi-party systems breed election violence and treason in the opposition, so they say. Multi-party democracy is an illusion, a serious hurdle to development because society becomes polarised and tribalism divides the nation into warring camps. A one-party state is the panacea, the medicine for the all ills of Africa. And no one dares to ask whether we do or do not have democracy before the one-party state. What improvement do we look forward to in the quality of democracy when the one-party state arrives? With all its grip on the media and the army and the police, what more power does the party wish for?

Let us forget about arguments about the economic programme. There is none and there will not be any just because we are a one-party state. Will all the power mentioned above mount an economic development programme of its choice, people's mandate or not? So, what is the reason for all this excitement about the one-party state in the face of every contradiction in Eastern Europe, Algeria, Zaire, Zambia, Kenya, Benin — the list is endless.

In my view, the answer is fear of criticism, fear of being undermined by honest criticism. For, according to one contribution in the book *Turmoil and Tenacity*, unity precedes the one-party state and since unity is the sacred will of the people of Zimbabwe, then the one-party state is *ipso facto* a sacred goal. Anyone who dares to stand in the way of this logic is a traitor. Anyone who dares challenge our demi-gods is a subvert. In this way those found guilty like some of those in the "Willowgate scandal" are accorded comfort. Were they not pardoned?

In this way we loudly defend "Our African way". Whenever we do not want to admit our stupidity or embarrassment we hide behind our way of doing things. For God's sake, we are condemning ourselves to eternal backwardness and universal ridicule. We have no right to deny our children and our heirs the benefit of intellectual and material evolution. We have no cause to wallow in narrow dogmas when we could be developing in many ways.

Because of this anti-intellectual culture, people lose the habit of thinking and exchanging creative views and thoughts. People have no real interest in the future nation — only the present owes them anything. And this spirit is shared by the majority of the ruling class, the capitalists, the bourgeoisie, the workers and peasants. Worse still, the leadership holds the common citizens to ransom by insisting that since they led the war against colonial oppressors, they alone have the sacred right to rule. End of debate. The rest is fear, silence and bewilderment.

They will even go as far as allowing youth brigades to run their lives for as long as it means that they are being seen to be on the side of the ruling party. This is Africa's tragedy, the inability to value every single innocent life and bring happiness to its people without demanding eternal gratitude. How these urban thugs can determine who voted for who remains a mystery. Still, the party is happy. The party is only upset that the police and the law should disrupt this festival of violence, gore and power.

I remember the following words from a worried citizen: "Listen, I am no politician. All I want to do is live and mind my own business. I can pay for the party card. Goodness knows I will vote for the party at election. I live in my country and will die for it here or anywhere. But, why can't they leave me alone?"

Anyone can see that this is a cry of anguish, not of jubilation for freedom. This person was not even an intellectual but someone from the masses, the *povo* who will rule in the millenium. His story will never be heard in this culture of total blackout of criticism and selective concern for human

beings, party cadres. Their pain and suffering is exemplary, produces the best oratory out of our leaders. And yet strangely, I can hear a voice shouting, "This is Africa!" And I can only retort that this is not Africa but a corrupt version of it, a crude version which does not know yet when to stop making its people cry. That is, until they seize the opportunity to shout back in the few desperate moments offered by an uprising.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# SHOULD ZIMBABWE GO WHERE OTHERS ARE COMING FROM?

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### Masipula Sithole

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#### ENCOUNTER WITH TWO AFRICAN PROPHETS

About a year into independence in 1981, a long-time Malawian friend and colleague in perpetual exile from his country was visiting our newly born Republic on some "institution-building" assignment. We were reminiscing about our college days in the United States in the 1960s when we were both exiles from our different countries. How is it that now my exile has ended while his own is still in force? My friend took the unfeeling observation with characteristic wit and humour. He advised:

"But Bwana, you haven't even begun your exile yet. When we met in 1968 I wasn't running away from Welensky. We had long passed that stage since the Federation died in 1963. I was running away from Kamuzu. You are only starting yours. I give you at least ten years at the most. Masipula, the one-party state is coming to Zimbabwe. And, it is coming with all the trimmings that have always accompanied it: corruption, the police state, and a tyrant. Zimbabwe is not different from the rest of Africa. Wait and see. Let's compare notes ten years from now, here or somewhere in exile."<sup>1</sup>

Some time in 1983, I was invited to a symposium on Muammar Al Qadhafi's *The Green Book* which claimed to offer the "*final solution*" to the problem of the instrument of governing."<sup>2</sup> I encountered at this symposium fellow Africans: alienated intellectuals and disgruntled politicians estranged from their own countries, all in search of a "third alternative" of governance, which was neither capitalism (because capitalism was based on the exploitation of man by man), nor communism (because communism was based on the prosperity of man without Allah's guidance). An exile from Liberia, an elderly Mr Taylor,<sup>3</sup> on hearing I was a Sithole from Zimbabwe, came to my breakfast table.

"You are from Zimbabwe and you are a Sithole," he started. "Is Ndabaningi any relation of yours," he asked. I replied that he was, in fact, my elder brother. "Is he locked up?" Mr Taylor continued his questioning. I replied that my brother was, in fact, farming on the outskirts of Harare. Mr Taylor then asked what had been the fate of Bishop Muzorewa, Mr Joshua Nkomo and Mr Ian Smith. I replied, with an unconcealed sense of pride in my country's newly acquired freedom, that all three gentlemen had been elected to Parliament in 1980 and, therefore, were MPs until the next

elections constitutionally scheduled to take place in 1985. I also told my guest that Mr Nkomo was, in fact, one of our cabinet ministers appointed by Prime Minister Mugabe despite the fact that he still led Zimbabwe's main opposition party.

I had gained Mr Taylor's confidence. He confessed that when he heard that I was a Sithole he had thought I was in exile like himself on account of my brother who he knew had lost out in the Zimbabwe struggles-within-the-struggle, and that he thought it his Pan-Africanist duty to comfort new arrivals to exile, running away from the tyranny of fellow Africans. Mr Taylor then took the occasion to tell me what he thought of my leader.

"Robert Mugabe is another Nkrumah. I mean in the sense of a Great Redeemer," he said, almost with biblical excitement. "They come every 30 years or so," he assured. "In as much as Kwame Nkrumah showed us the light and gave us inspiration to fight against colonial bondage in the 1950s and 60s, in the 1980s Robert Mugabe is the Messiah that brings new inspiration to the continent in our fight against the tyranny that has become the curse of Africa. That Mr Mugabe is magnanimous and accommodating to his former opponents, allowing them to be in Parliament — even appointing them to cabinet posts — confirms that my dream of another Redeemer has been answered."<sup>4</sup>

I was to reflect in my hotel room that evening which of my two prophets was right on the scenario in Zimbabwe, the Malawian or the Liberian? They were both exiles and foreigners, and could not possibly have a stake in Zimbabwe. But the two prophets could not both be right. I had to make a judgement. "The Liberian was older and therefore wiser," I thought to myself. "The Malawian was 'familiar' and known at times to be prone to cynicism," I remembered. So I went for the more flattering and optimistic scenario. But about a year after the encounter with Mr Taylor in Libya, Ndabaningi Sithole and Bishop Muzorewa, and later Joshua Nkomo went into self-imposed exile claiming that their lives were in danger.<sup>5</sup>

## A VISIT TO THREE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

Up until 1984, I had not been to a socialist country outside Africa. The opportunity came in August 1984 when I visited the German Democratic Republic and Yugoslavia during my contact leave from the University of Zimbabwe, aiming at getting a glimpse of Zimbabwe's future as a socialist state. Finally, another rare opportunity came later that year when, in November, I visited the People's Republic of China to catch a Sino version of our communist future.



In the GDR a colleague at Humbolt University (Karl Marx once taught there), on learning that I had come to East Berlin via West Berlin, decided to tell me what he termed a "bourgeois joke". He talked about a well-fed East Berlin dog which had found a secret escape to the other side of the Berlin Wall which it used from time to time. One day it saw a West Berlin dog looking for food in the garbage bins. In sympathy with his fellow species, he invited the West Berlin dog to East Berlin where the communist system guaranteed food, health and shelter for all dogs.

Right before crossing the Berlin Wall, the West Berliner asked, "If you say the comrades give you all these things, why do you come here risking the danger of being shot in the process? Are you a communist spy or something?" The East Berliner started to bark at the skies and the landscape and then said: "I take all this risk because from time to time I want to bark. The comrades won't let me bark so I take the risk each time I feel the irresistible urge to bark."

"You see Professor," my host explained, "it is in the nature of dogs to bark. And it is in the nature of man to want to express his feelings and opinions freely. This is where bourgeois democracy is very far ahead of us," he observed.<sup>6</sup> Six years later thousands of people crushed the Berlin Wall, crossed to the West, stretched and 'barked', sung and danced and returned to their homes to chart a new-socio-economic path and make new friendships after nearly 45 years of one-party dictatorship with all its wasteful propaganda.<sup>7</sup>

In Yugoslavia, a senior colleague at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Social Sciences, came for me at Hotel Slavia for a tour of the city. We stopped to obey a red light and a creamish-green Mercedes Benz pulled and stopped by the side of our 1967 VW Beetle. I asked my host who might be in that Merc? His reply was that: "Because the Merc does not have a CD licence number plate, there is only one possibility. It should belong to one of the leaders of the Yugoslav League of Communists, the ruling party in Yugoslavia. At the university, we call them the 'red bourgeoisie'," he said, adding, "I bet you have some of those in Harare by now!"<sup>8</sup>

Towards the end of a two-week visit to China in November of 1984, an elderly Chinese intellectual, who apparently had a press image of Zimbabwe as pursuing a reckless policy of the extreme left variety, pulled me to the side and asked, rather pensively: "Why is Zimbabwe going where we are coming from?" He meant our fixation with the one-party state and the socialist ideology when the rest of the world seemed to be questioning the communist orthodoxy and the one-party state idea.<sup>9</sup>

## ZIMBABWE TOWARDS A DE JURE ONE-PARTY-STATE?

Generally, Zimbabwe has been a *de facto* one-party state since independence in 1980. But there has also existed during the same period, an urge to establish a *de jure* one-party state. The frightening irony is that this urge has tended to grow in intensity in the leadership of the ruling party, ZANU-PF. Inversely proportional, the popularity of that party dwindled from a popular vote of 87% at independence in 1980; 97% in the first post-independence election in 1985, to 54% in the second post-independence election in 1990.<sup>10</sup> As I see it, a *de jure* one-party state in Zimbabwe is neither necessary nor obligatory on either prudential or moral grounds. In fact, to establish a one-party state in Zimbabwe would represent a reactionary anarchism that would take our dynamic society backwards when others are moving forward. The leadership of our country must rethink its strategy and goals and adjust them in the interest of posterity, even if it means eventually losing power.

A *de jure* one-party state exists where a country's constitution decrees that there shall be only one political party, making it illegal for any person to belong to another party, even if he or she campaigns on a "love thy neighbour" platform. On the other hand, a *de facto* one-party state exists where the party in power invariably wins every election because of its popularity. In this case, the constitution states that a party wins a majority of seats in parliament, shall form a government for a stipulated period, at the end of which fresh elections are held. The fresh elections do not preclude other political parties from seeking the mandate to govern.

Thus a *de facto* one-party state is one where a popular party continues to govern after every election with a renewed mandate from the people who have had the opportunity to choose other parties but prefer the ruling party instead. *Ko yanga yakaipei?* (What is wrong with that?)

## MUSHROOMING OF DE JURE ONE-PARTY-STATES

The model of a *de jure* one-party state was introduced to modern civilisation as an alternative variant of governance by the Bolsheviks, led by V. I. Lenin after the 1917 Revolution. Since then, it has been in vogue in a number of countries in various forms. *De jure* one-party states did not mushroom overnight after 1917. Contemporary East European political systems emerged from the circumstances of the Second World War and, broadly speaking, they were inspired by the Soviet example.

The African varieties of one-party states have been joining the queue since the decolonisation period in the 1960s. They were inspired initially by an uncritical and *gudzamudungwe* political psychology: We prefer to misgovern ourselves than to be governed well by foreigners."

This was followed by the short-lived "mystique of the heroic party", which rapidly changed to the present "fear of the ruling party" which runs right across African societies, including party officials themselves.

## THE VANGUARD

But, what is this Soviet model of one-party governance? It is based on the idea of the vanguard — a "torch bearer", or one who shows the way. The idea of the vanguard was popularised by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, and has since been embraced by all types of Leninists throughout the world. The vanguard was to be personified by the party. Lenin's conception of a party was that of an organisation of disciplined ideologues, committed to a communist future. Lenin introduced into the organisation of this vanguard party a very ingenious concept, that of "democratic centralism", a phrase we now typically mimic all over the place without examining its cunning implications. The ingenuity of this concept lies more in its effects than in its complexity.

## DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

The vanguard party is hierarchically structured like a pyramid with its first secretary at the top, followed by, in descending order, the politburo, central committee, provincial and district councils, branch and cell committees at the bottom. Within this hierarchy, party issues are discussed as they arise at any level. What is important is that, step-by-step channels must be followed in communicating party affairs up and down the hierarchy. Whenever a decision is taken by a superior structure immediately above, it is passed to the organ immediately below. That is the "centralism" part.

The "democratic" part is as follows. During discussion of an issue, members are "free" to speak their minds, even in opposition. But, they can only do so within their structural hierarchy in the party. Once a decision has been made and passed down the organisational line, it then must be implemented as party policy or directive. Party issues are not discussed outside the relevant party hierarchy. Any deviation from this line is seen as conspiracy against the party or organ thereof, and might cause suspension or expulsion from the party.

Democratic centralism tends to lay emphasis on the "centralism" part much more than on the "democratic" side of the equation. But this is as it was intended by Lenin, who sought to construct an instrument that could conspire, in secrecy, and issue its revolutionary commands effectively in the fight against the oppressive state of his time. It is unlikely that Lenin intended this instrument to be for all times and seasons. An appropriate instrument for inappropriate circumstances tends to produce wrong results. Before his death, Lenin warned Trotsky: "beware of Comrade Stalin", and not without good cause. After all, Stalin is the one who sharpened the vices of "centralism" in the Soviet Communist Party beyond the recognition of its "democratic" claims. It then took 60 years between Lenin and Gorbachev to unearth the remains of democracy in the Soviet system.

Essentially, democratic centralism is a neutral instrument that can be used for both revolutionary and reactionary ends. But in African politics, particularly when the *ancien regime* (colonialism) is gone, this instrument has most often been used for reactionary ends. The politics of one-party vanguards are inappropriate to civil society, particularly if one has democratic values in mind.

## ZIMBABWE'S VANGUARD

Let us pause to reflect on what sort of "torch bearers" we have in Zimbabwe. When one day you hear of sharks that have chewed up the Leadership Code; another day you hear of MPs napping in the hallowed chambers; of drinking parliamentarians who should not be taken seriously; of expulsions from the party of Central Committee members for voicing criticism outside the confining channels of democratic centralism; of a governor beating reporters investigating a legitimate news story; and yet another day you read about curious goings on in Courts of Law in Gutu; of political pandemonium in Mupandawana; of "Willowgates" at Willowvale; of torch bearers bashing at "little Nyarotas"; of the Frederick Shava pardon; of hotels and huge farms being bought by some men at the top; and of quarrels involving Politburo members over a tender for a Casino to be located somewhere near Lake Kyle; and, finally when you hear of the man at the top complaining that at times he feels alone in the pursuit of cardinal party policies,<sup>11</sup> one is left to wonder: why the hurry for a one-party state? What else is going on?

What do signs of political degeneracy and decay look like? Might a *de jure* one-party state not be the facility for even more political degeneracy and

decay when such torch bearers have insulated themselves in power? The one-party state invariably leads to political complacency, unchecked corruption and government by the police. What makes things worse is that these torch bearers might be occupying key positions at various levels of the vanguard party. From such a vantage point, they can manipulate democratic centralism to defend their positions and interests. Who has ever heard that comrade "so and so", an MP or cabinet minister, was taken to task at a branch meeting in his constituency for sleeping or for absenteeism in parliament? Political degeneracy and decay have many manifestations, and these are some of them.<sup>12</sup>

Sometime ago, President Mugabe, in apparent anguish over this phenomenon in the leadership, asked a painful question: "If gold rusts, what will iron do?"<sup>13</sup> Sure, iron readily rusts and we could be looking at cheap iron. The gold is here all right, but the problem lies in its identification and processing in the surrounding rock. And our luck is that we do not need *Uncle Forex* to do it.

## A CASE FOR THE MULTI-PARTY STATE

The unity between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU should not lead to a *de jure* one-party state anachronism now or in the future. Moreover, it is not correct nor is it entirely honest to say the *povo* is crying for a one-party state, but rather for employment, housing and transport. The numerous strikes have been over higher wages to cope with the ever rising cost of living and not to express a desire for the one-party state. Moreover, ZANU-PF itself would not have been formed had the anachronistic idea of "one leader" or "one nationalist party" been accepted by the nationalist movement in the 1960s. In fact, the very dynamo that propelled ZANU throughout its history has been the rejection of this anachronistic tendency. *Ko, nhasi zvaitasei?* (What has happened now that we wish to stop this vibrant dialectic?)

Is it our commitment to socialism? Or is it our sensitivity to peasant sentiment? Is it our awareness of the wisdom tradition? Or we are so convinced that we are the few chosen ones who should be going where others are coming from to fulfil God's secret plan to serve us? Even if socialism is our goal (which I sincerely doubt given the above observations about the torch bearers), a multi-party state does not preclude a socialist government. It is a distortion and falsification of history to always link socialism with a one-party state. Socialist-oriented governments come and go in Britain, West Germany, France, Italy, the Scandinavian countries and Canada. The fact is, the one-party state is always linked with tyranny and dictatorship.

This we know, not because bourgeois scholars and politicians have told us, but because the comrades have told us what they have been through.

Under the circumstances of the torch bearers such as observed above, any honestly genuine person who still thinks clearly can see that there is a case for competing vanguards or torch bearers in Zimbabwe today. The fact that in Zimbabwe practising capitalists pursue a socialist ideology in theory speaks to the need for another party. I submit that it is not socialism that the one-party state idea is intended for, but the insulation of the above contradiction where capitalists are the custodians of a socialist ideology.

Even given the absence of the above contradiction and all ZANU-PF leaders did not own farms, real estate, etc., and did not have an impulse for gambling casinos (that will be the day of the second coming!), why would it be necessary to legislate other parties out of existence? There is overwhelming evidence that Zimbabweans are not ideologically a monolith. Some prefer socialism, others capitalism, but most seem to favour a mixed economy. What do we do with people who prefer the other two ideologies? Should we not allow them room to campaign for their ideas also? Who told us that our ideas are and will always be correct? More importantly, how do we know that our ideas will always have the support of the people? Is it not possible that we prefer the one-party state because we are not sure we will always have the support of the majority?

I often hear claims that the one-party idea has overwhelming support in the countryside. Those who make this claim also acknowledge the fact that the same cannot be said about the urban dwellers who are overwhelmingly opposed to the one-party state. Do we assume their perceptions and preferences are not important and hope to be taken seriously? In a perceptive contribution to this debate, Fay Chung has observed that the peasantry is a class on the exit and advised ZANU-PF leaders to adjust their strategies accordingly.<sup>14</sup> I could not agree with her more. In fact, this is why I think that those who are serious about the "land question" should know the answer lies in the resolution of the "factory question".

But more importantly, for this discussion, since when has a Marxist-Leninist party relied on the peasantry for a socialist project? Are we, in fact, not witnessing an opportunistic alliance with peasants in order to use their ignorance of the tyranny of the one-party state? We even use the "one bull in a kraal" symbolism to animate them to support the hoax. We are not talking about bulls and kraals in villages of antiquity. We are talking about gentlemen in parliaments in a modern state.

If ZANU-PF does not want to heed the above advice and adjust to the working class reality, the decent and democratic option would be to remain a peasant party and concentrate on a strategy that keeps the country people perpetual peasants, superstitious, ignorant, and always in the majority. That way it will always win every democratic election in the competition with other parties. But such a strategy runs the risk of other parties making in-roads into the countryside to expose to the country folk what the urban proletariat has already seen, that the one-party state is undemocratic, and that is why those who started it elsewhere now reject it with both anger and contempt. Could this be the reason for the hurry to establish a one-party state?

The point I am trying to drive home to our leaders is that they will have to deal with the Fay Chung thesis. Somehow, ZANU-PF, or another party, will have to deal with the "factory question".

But while wars of national liberation, in a largely peasant country, may be fought and won from the countryside, modern governments are administered and maintained from the cities. Moreover, it is also historically true that the wars of national liberation are first inspired from the city by men and women who can read and write, who have a world and not a village outlook. That is the question of the future, and not the "land question".

Could the desire for a one-party state be motivated by the concern in our leaders for stability and national unity, as they often are at pains to say? In other words, is the objective of the one-party state that of insulating national unity, and not the torch bearers in power, as we suspect?

Our forerunners in the one-party state enterprise had made similar "logical" but simplistic assumptions that the one-party state would bring stability and national unity to their countries. "Logical" in the sense that the assumption is premised on the UNIP algebraic equation: One Zambia = One Nation; One Nation = One Leader; That Leader = - - - . "Simplistic" for the same reason: This equation portrays our inability to handle complex issues of governance. We therefore resort to simple arithmetic and declare to the whole world that we have found "our own" (and typically African) theory of governance.

The Soviet Union came into being in 1917 and was run *de jure* for over 70 years by one party which is now disintegrating. Had the one-party states of Eastern Europe been an exception, we might have reason to doubt the Soviet experience on the grounds that it is only a Soviet problem. But when the unique becomes universal it loses its unique character. And, as in the

earlier sequence, the virus against the one-party state has caught the African continent.

Finally, what is the point we are making? It is that none of my two African prophets has been proven wrong, at least not yet. There is a tendency, but only a tendency towards the Malawian's prediction, if not that country's experience. However, there is a glimmer of hope for the other prophecy. "But show us the signs, Professor!" some will ask.

They are written all over the place, but you cannot see them for asking. We still are relatively much freer people. We still can express our ideas through an alternative press if the editors of *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail* do not want to. Lately, the 25 years of the state of emergency has been lifted. Shall I say more?

Moreover, we have known President Mugabe once before for being a listening and consultative leader. That is why he is where he is today, by following the wishes of the people. He cannot now ignore the same and hope for a different outcome.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. We have since met on several occasions and each time he laughs with glee, as if to say, "I told you so". But I also remind him that Zimbabwe is not a one-party state and that my leader is far from being a notorious tyrant. And each time he insists I add the word "yet" at the end of my statement on both counts, namely the one-party state and a tyrant.
2. Qaddhafi, Muammar Al, *The Green Book* (Tripoli: Public Establishment for Publishing, undated), p.5 Emphasis added.
3. I don't know if he is any relation to Charles Taylor, the rebel leader.
4. Mr. Taylor claimed to have known Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah personally and to have served in some top level capacity in the Liberian government during Tubman's days.
5. Bishop Muzorewa and Nkomo later returned from exile. The Bishop has since resigned from politics for his church. Nkomo has remained in politics, joining ZANU-PF in 1987. Sithole is still in exile.
6. I was told that "bourgeois television" stations beamed from just across the wall in West Berlin were very popular with the young generation.
7. The fall of the Ceaucescu regime in Romania, and the regime's resentment in Albania are testimony that human beings have a



natural urge to want to "bark". And, it is a waste of time and resources to seek the suppression of this natural urge.

8. When we stopped to have coffee at an open air coffee shop, this man had occasion to cartoon and demystify communism and communist leaders further, starting from Marshal Tito himself whom he said he knew personally and had notorious marital problems and had overstayed in power. Thus, "we lost time and the opportunity to attend to Yugoslavia's many problems. This ridiculous system of a rotating presidency every year is because of him. And he is supposed to be alive when he is dead," he protested.
9. In China at that time, there was euphoria with Deng Xiaoping's programmes to modernise China by introducing the market economy and greater political pluralism.
10. Although ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU fought the elections of 1980 and 1985 separately, they had joined forces by the 1990 elections. It therefore makes comparative sense to combine electoral strengths in each past election.
11. See *supplement* to the first issue of *The People's Voice* June, 1990, p.52.
12. A roll call has been introduced as a mechanism to check on absenteeism. To date since no names have been published in the press as promised. We therefore assume perfect attendance. As for the sleeping problem, the mechanism has not been spelt out.
13. This theme recurred in his address to the Consultative National Assembly of ZANU-PF. See Note 11 above.
14. In *Parade*, June, 1990.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# THE DIALECTICS OF NATIONAL UNITY AND DEMOCRACY IN ZIMBABWE

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**Jonathan Moyo**

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On April 18, 1990, Zimbabwe completed its first decade as an independent nation. This event not only marked the end of the 1979 Lancaster Constitutional Agreement which paved the way for Zimbabwe's independence, but it also opened up new possibilities for the hierarchy of the country's nationalist leaders in ZANU-PF to seek the establishment of a legislated one-party state which they could not do before because of entrenched clauses of the Lancaster Constitution which guaranteed freedom to join and form political parties.

Although in the pre-independence agenda of ZANU-PF as per a resolution of the party's 1977 congress in Mozambique which was later reaffirmed in 1984 at the party's first post-independence congress inside Zimbabwe, the drive towards a one-party state began in earnest with the enactment of Zimbabwe Constitutional Amendment (No. 7) Act, 1987 which established an Executive Presidency. This amendment was immediately followed by the signing of a unity agreement between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF on December 22, 1987. This agreement removed PF-ZAPU, at least temporarily, as a thorny obstacle to ZANU-PF's commitment to a legislated one-party state in that one of the "agreed" principles was that the "united" party would seek to establish a one-party state in Zimbabwe.

On December 22, 1989 the two parties merged into a "new" party, ZANU-PF, committed to the establishment of a one-party state. Although this commitment was made in an atmosphere of controversy and minimum, if any, debate, the drive towards a one-party state in Zimbabwe was set in motion as the country prepared for the 1990 general and presidential elections. Indeed, it may be that the one-party state issue was not seriously debated at the "unity" congress because the party hierarchy feared that such a debate would be divisive and would give the opposition electoral ammunition.<sup>1</sup>

Since political independence in 1980, the Zimbabwean body politic has been going through a "Machiavellian Moment", muddling through a soul-searching process of finding a widely acceptable political system

beyond the country's colonial heritage and meeting obstacles and opportunities along the way. The muddling through reached its peak in 1990 with intensified debate on democracy and the one-party state.<sup>2</sup> Whatever resolution may obtain in the interim, indications are that the debate will remain in a dialectical state for some time. This is as it should be. Matters of finding the best possible and enduring type of political order in any social system cannot be resolved over-night.

Against this muddling through background in search of political order, this chapter seeks to critically examine two salient issues which have been at the forefront of the Zimbabwe debate: national unity and democracy. The dialectical relationship between these two issues is central to the understanding of the political framework of Zimbabwe's search for political order between 1980 and 1990.

The position taken in this chapter is that democracy is a much more important human ideal to strive for than national unity. The latter is not a human ideal, it is a matter of political expediency in the struggle for political power. To suggest — as the ZANU-PF leadership has implied since the signing of the unity agreement between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF on December 22, 1989 — that national unity is more important than democracy, is tantamount to making a historical conversion that alters the course and purpose of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle.

National unity is a post-independence phenomenon in Zimbabwean politics without inherent virtues. The substantive meaning of national unity within the context of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe should be seen against the background of the quest for democracy. Without this context, it becomes misleading to suggest that there is something inherently sacrosanct about national unity. Moreover, given the intensified desire of the top leadership in ZANU-PF to have a legislated one-party state and the national debate caused by that desire, it is problematic to define national unity within the confines of a single political party no matter how well intentioned that party may be.

National unity must be a dialectical result of competing parties under common broad-based democratic constitutional rules. During the first decade of political independence, and notwithstanding the tenuous multi-party provisions of the Lancaster Constitution, the Zimbabwean body politic characteristically lacked tolerant value premises nor did it have functional constitutional qualities and mechanisms for accommodating more than one political party and national leader as a matter of serious national unity. This problem was vividly demonstrated on May 27, 1989 by

the then Secretary of the Women's League, Mrs. Joyce Mujuru who, addressing a sparsely attended ZANU-PF women's demonstration against the formation of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), said:

... in African custom the father was the head of a house. If anything went wrong, a child would not complain to the father, but would seek other ways of doing so ... You will never get a child telling his father to step down because he has failed to run the affairs of the house, but there are always ways of dealing with their problems. Even in a marriage there is no family without its problems but there are ways to solve them.<sup>3</sup>

To suggest that the presidency of a nation is metaphorically equivalent to fatherhood in a family, and that citizens are equivalent to children, is a dangerous form of paternalism fundamentally in conflict with the possibility of democracy in a modern political system.<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Mujuru's characterisation and application of African custom is anachronistic and false and yet it has been part of the case used, largely by politicians, for national unity in Zimbabwe. The case has been based on a failure to appreciate that the price of modern political order is calculated on the basis of human rights, and not obscure customs of convenience. One such necessary human right is the right to form and join political associations.

During the days of Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), blacks in Zimbabwe were denied the right to form political associations. It is in this context that political parties, which later fought successfully for independence, such as ZANU and ZAPU, were banned, while other smaller parties, such as Bishop Abel Muzorewa's United African National Council (UANC) had their activities severely curtailed.

For Zimbabweans to experience the totality of political independence, it is necessary that they have the right to form political associations since this is precisely what they were denied for almost a century and because political freedom is the basis of all other freedoms. To suggest that political participation is only possible within the context of the machinery of the ruling party is tantamount to saying that what is good for ZANU-PF is good for everyone, a suggestion which is patently false as far as what is known about the diversity of the human condition goes.

The fundamental problem in the struggle for Zimbabwe was one of *racism* and not *democracy* as such. The basic ingredients for an institutional framework for national democracy were already present in Rhodesia despite, or because of, its racism. The existence of such a framework, which was largely due to "intra-white democracy", explains why Zimbabwe may be different from other African countries such as Angola and Mozambique which, like Zimbabwe, waged armed resistance to colonialism.

Despite having the armed struggle in common, there appear to be vast differences of political consciousness between, say, Mozambicans and Angolans on the one hand, and Zimbabweans on the other. Until very recently when dramatic developments started taking place, Angolans and Mozambicans had tolerated self-imposed governments since the fall of Portuguese rule in the two countries. Ten years into their independence, Angolans and Mozambicans were yet to experience the right to choose their political leaders through democratic elections, whereas Zimbabweans had exercised that right three times since independence in 1980.

If the armed struggle brings a revolution, that is, a democratic consciousness as some leftist radicals might want to believe, then why is it that democracy has been slow in coming to Mozambique and Angola? The explanation cannot be all because of imperialist forces; there must be an equally, if not more, compelling case based on internal considerations. When all is said and done, on what political basis did FRELIMO and MPLA claim legitimate authority when they ascended to power through the bullet and not the ballot? Why has it taken too long for these two organisations to submit themselves to the test of the consent of the governed?

Answers to such questions are not to be found in the armed struggle waged by FRELIMO and MPLA. There is no inherent virtue in an armed struggle as the two organisations have found out from the armed resistance they have respectively endured from RENAMO and UNITA. As such, rather than looking at the armed struggle as something that positively changes people's consciousness, more attention should be given to the internal composition of the country in question in terms of the entrenched culture of its political tradition and moral values regardless of whether the country is under colonial occupation or any other rule.

In this respect, Angola and Mozambique could not be expected to suddenly embrace democracy at their independence when they had not had even a semblance of democracy for over 500 hundred years of colonial rule which, unlike in Zimbabwe, had no significant values of "intra-settler" tolerance. Portuguese rule of the two countries was crude and without any virtues of democracy. When Angola and Mozambique got their independence, there was a flight of Portuguese capital and skilled personnel. The Portuguese could not entertain the idea of staying in these two countries because they knew too well that they had not planted a tradition of democracy, a tradition which had never existed in Portugal itself. Therefore, they feared black revenge against whites since the possibility of racial reconciliation at the time of Angolan and Mozambican independence was non-existent.

In Zimbabwe, the situation was quite different. The period before, during and after UDI was characterised by several attempts to bring some semblance of constitutional democracy through the limited efforts of the British Government and the international community. Whereas it is true that white settlers in Rhodesia were racists, it is also true that they nevertheless had some inclination toward democratic values with respect to their own kith and kin. UDI attempted to project itself as an expression of Western democratic values of "intra-white" tolerance. It is for this reason that the armed struggle in Zimbabwe was waged, not really to bring the institution of democracy into the country, but to broaden it to everyone by removing racism.

Against this background of the struggle against racism for democracy in Zimbabwe, there has emerged a basic contradiction within the ruling party. The performance of ZANU-PF since independence has been less than satisfactory on the score of broadening democracy to all Zimbabweans in the wake of the defeat of institutionalised racism in 1980. One of the consequences of the 1987 unity agreement between, and the 1989 merger of, PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF, has been to leave the "united" party vulnerable to intra- let alone extra-party opposition.<sup>5</sup>

There are two possible explanations for the unsatisfactory performance of ZANU-PF on the question of democracy. The first is that, after independence in 1980, the pre-independence nationalist movement in Zimbabwe abandoned the goal of the struggle for democracy in favour of an ill-defined quest for national unity (ill-defined because it was based on the desire for a legislated one-party state and thus the concentration — rather than the broadening — of power in the hands of a few). The nationalist leadership obtained this type of national unity with the merger of the two parties in 1987. While this has been hailed as an achievement of national unity, the more honest fact is that the achievement was of unity between two parties which, although they played a decisive role in the struggle for independence of Zimbabwe, do not *ipso facto* represent everyone.

The political, cultural and economic interests of the Zimbabwean nation are too complex and by far larger than similar interests in PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF combined. Failure to realise this constitutes part of the explanation why ZANU-PF's performance has been seen by some citizens to be unsatisfactory in that the ruling party has sought to restrict rather than to broaden democracy. Whereas democracy in Rhodesia was racially defined and restricted to the whims and caprices of Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front, there has been a tendency after independence to define democracy

in terms of "unity, peace and development" under the guidance of one political party, ZANU-PF.<sup>6</sup>

The second explanation for the unsatisfactory performance of ZANU-PF on the question of democracy ten years after independence is that the ruling party has pursued liberal economic policies using a political approach which has emphasised centralised control under the *veil of socialism*. In evaluative terms, the performance of ZANU-PF elements who have been running government affairs since independence has been less than satisfactory, if seen against the background of the self-proclaimed socialist platform of the ruling party. Over the first decade of independence, ZANU-PF showed itself to be without a procedural policy of socialism. If anything, the known life styles of the leadership,<sup>7</sup> and the aspirations of the general party membership<sup>8</sup> are close to acquisitive capitalism. ZANU-PF's claim to socialism has not had an empirical policy basis. Policy formulation in Zimbabwe, over the past ten years and particularly now with the advent of trade liberalisation and structural adjustment programmes, has proceeded under the guidance of international capital without the influence of the party as an organised organ with a specific policy agenda.<sup>9</sup> Instead, the ruling party has suffered through a syndrome of using words which are loosely identifiable with socialism purely for propaganda purposes. It was perhaps his recognition of, and frustration about, this syndrome that President Mugabe told delegates who were urging the party to drop references to Marxism-Leninism to consider adopting social democracy.<sup>10</sup>

To be sure, Zimbabweans have experienced drastic quantitative changes in essential social services such as health and education since independence, under the leadership of ZANU-PF.<sup>11</sup> However, these changes, which are yet to see qualitative improvements, did not take place as a result of the pursuit of socialist policies. Rather, they happened because of the *law of the situation* based on the consideration that social systems change relative to the clear and present socio-economic disparities which must be dealt with to give a legitimate appearance of change. The historical situation in Zimbabwe necessitated changes in the country's health and educational systems without which independence would have appeared to be a joke to many blacks who had been systematically excluded on racial grounds. It is no exaggeration to say that approximately similar changes would have taken place with a "right wing" party such as the UANC, but this is not to say that ZANU-PF itself has no right wing tendencies. In fact, most of the housing, educational and health policies implemented by the ZANU-PF

Government over the first decade of independence have their origins in the short-lived Muzorewa Government of 1979.<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, it was not surprising that the pre-independence socialist rhetoric of ZANU-PF dwindled with the tick of time. Today, there is a conspicuous silence about socialism save for occasional outbursts which, instead of being intelligible and inspiring, tend to give socialism a bad name, particularly given the collapse of socialism in Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>13</sup> ZANU-PF has, over the last ten years, failed to make socialism relevant to socio-economic conditions in Zimbabwe. Instead, when the party came into power in 1980, the public was subjected to lofty talk about egalitarianism. Now the same public is being subjected to talk, under the veil of socialism, about long overdue economic liberalisation and structural adjustment.

Therefore, if one were to use some kind of text book socialist blueprint and ZANU-PF's publicly proclaimed principles made before and since 1980, the ruling party's 1980 to 1990 performance falls far below expectations of the workers and peasants whom the party claims to represent.<sup>14</sup> Besides, and rather unhappily for the ruling party, the end of ZANU-PF's first decade of rule coincided with the collapse of socialism in Eastern and Central Europe under the demands for democracy and economic efficiency. Zimbabwe's leadership seemed to look for inspiration to the collapsed socialist models such that it was a sobering irony that Ceaucescu's one-party rule in Romania ended violently on the same day, December 22, 1989, when PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF signed a unity agreement with a pledge to establish a similar one-party state in Zimbabwe.

The combined effect of ZANU-PF's failure to define national unity in broad terms and its failure to have a well defined meaning and understanding of procedural socialism has led to the alienation of many Zimbabweans who would otherwise support the ruling party particularly because of its contribution to the liberation struggle. What this means is that ZANU-PF has not yet come up with a viable, non-racial, policy of national reconciliation which can broaden democracy in Zimbabwe outside monopoly politics. One consequence of this accommodation problem is that, in Zimbabwe, national reconciliation has several features most of which are still pending. The totality of reconciliation in Zimbabwe encompasses at least four types of political accommodation.

1. accommodation between black and white populations;
2. accommodation between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF;
3. accommodation within ZANU-PF; and



#### 4. accommodation within PF-ZAPU.<sup>15</sup>

Arguably, the period since independence in 1980 witnessed some measure of racial reconciliation, even though blacks and whites in Zimbabwe remain a breed apart in cultural and social terms.<sup>16</sup> Following the unity agreement between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU at the end of 1987, there has been some noticeable reconciliation between the two major parties, PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF, although some issues are yet to be resolved as evidenced by the unhappiness of some elements in PF-ZAPU when in April 1990 only three of the party's former hierarchy were included in the Cabinet, at the exclusion of such stalwarts as Dumiso Dabengwa who became deputy minister, who had been expected to get a cabinet post after the 1990 general and presidential elections.

Notwithstanding documents such as the 1987 unity agreement which suggests the contrary, PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF do not appear to have a common position on the question of the establishment of a legislated one-party state. Indeed, senior members of PF-ZAPU such as Dumiso Dabengwa openly opposed the idea of a legislated one-party state at the 1989 PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF joint congress.<sup>17</sup> The possibility of the two parties going their separate ways, or having some kind of split, exists if the issue of the one-party state remains on ZANU-PF's national agenda.

While the reconciliation between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU and between whites and blacks appear to be at least on course, the question of internal reconciliation within each of the two major parties remains elusive. Indeed, the latter does not even appear to be on the agenda of the ruling elite in either party.

Within PF-ZAPU, intra-party unity has been quite a thorny issue since the period following independence. Two issues point to this problem. First, the dissident menace, triggered by what some saw as an affair of disgruntled self-styled "Super ZAPU" elements — notwithstanding the doubts of other diehard ZAPU loyalists who have questioned the authenticity of dissidents as a machination of PF-ZAPU.

Second, the rather opportunistic flight from PF-ZAPU to ZANU-PF by political figures such as Callistus Ndlovu, David Kwidini and Jacob Mudenda, served an early signal that PF-ZAPU needed internal reconciliation before the party could seriously think of reconciliation with other parties. Indeed, despite the consideration that some key individuals in former PF-ZAPU like John Nkomo now seem to be riding high in the ruling circles with close ties to Vice-President Muzenda, there nevertheless appears to be deep seated dissonance within the former PF-ZAPU hierarchy

and between it and its rank and file. Some leaders in former PF-ZAPU are increasingly becoming subjects of uncharitable public jokes and general ridicule by former PF-ZAPU supporters at what they see as the party leadership's betrayal of the masses in favour of self-aggrandisement in the name of national unity. The rather high (about 30%) Bulawayo vote which ZUM got in the 1990 general and presidential elections spoke volumes about this. The results were so surprising that the former leader of the PF-ZAPU, Joshua Nkomo, got the lowest vote of all winning candidates in Matabeleland. Despite these considerations, it is important to underscore without doubt that many people in Matabeleland are happy that the dissident days are over even though there are lingering questions about the nature and meaning of the unity agreement between, and the subsequent merger of, PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF.

In the case of ZANU-PF, the failure of intra-party unity took a dramatic turn for the worse with the expulsion of Edgar Tekere on October 27, 1988. This came at a time when the ruling party was going through a trying period of internal squabbles. Quite topical then was the Mahofa saga at Mupandawana district in Gutu South.<sup>18</sup> Before the Mahofa affair in Gutu South, similar echoes of disunity were heard in the Midlands and in Harare where ZANU-PF independents publicly challenged official party candidates at local elections with some successful results.<sup>19</sup>

In Manicaland, which became the hot ground of Zimbabwean politics with the formation of ZUM in 1989, ZANU-PF had trodden on difficult territory since independence. This is because the ruling party had to contend with persistent forces of Bishop Muzorewa and the self-exiled Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole. While some may view these politicians as external to ZANU-PF, they and their supporters are in fact internal to ZANU-PF's internal reconciliation problem in the historical sense. The ruling party will not be able to sustain its commitment to national unity without finding a viable strategy of how to deal particularly with Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and his supporters in Chipinge who have continued to vote ZANU-Ndonga since 1980.

The foregoing four features of national reconciliation point to the political problem of democracy in Zimbabwe. As was argued earlier, the struggle for Zimbabwe was really about extending democracy to everyone as opposed to having it as a preserve of a white racial minority or any monopolistic group. ZANU-PF's problem in this area is that the ruling party has attempted to restrict the concept of democracy to its own sphere of influence by defining the concept within the narrow confines of "national unity" which is only tantamount to unity of two political parties.

On the basis of this narrow definition of democracy and national unity, the ruling party has complicated matters further by seeking to establish a legislated one-party state with the consequence of still further diminishing the ruling party's view of national unity which cannot, by definition, exist in a legislated one-party state. To close the democratic door on citizens with dissenting opinions by instituting a one-party state, through whatever means, is a colossal betrayal in the context of the history of Zimbabwe with a rather formidable tradition of multi-partyism. Whatever democracy may mean, it should begin with the right to choose between, not only competing values personified by individual politicians but also, through competing parties with competing programmes. It is negative conservatism to assume and believe that any one party can ever have the final and perpetual solution to all problems of any social system. Such conservatism has no existential basis.

Towards the middle of 1990, and after a rather heated national debate, the onus fell on the ZANU-PF leadership to put up or shut up on the ruling party's declared intention to establish a one-party state in Zimbabwe. The door for this was opened by President Mugabe when he recently stated his case for a legislated one-party state in Zimbabwe as being based on the following considerations:<sup>20</sup>

1. Establishment of a one-party state formed the basis of the unity agreement between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF in 1987.
2. Establishment of a one-party state was agreed by a joint congress of PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF in 1989.
3. President Mugabe personally is an "apostle of the one-party state".
4. President Mugabe believes that the pressure for multi-partyism is coming from Western countries which have no right to teach democracy to Zimbabweans given the historical fact that one of these Western countries (Britain which has been vocal on the matter) is the same which colonised Zimbabwe in the first place.

While it is in the public record that ZANU-PF has always wanted a one-party state at least as far back as 1977 and while it is self-evident that the party has since 1987 sought to establish an institutional framework for its one-party state wish — most notably demonstrated by the unity agreement between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF and constitutional amendments numbers 7, 9 and 10 which do not make sense outside the context of a one-party state — a case still remains that the ruling party must nevertheless realise that there is one eternal obstacle which cannot be removed by any form of constitutional mechanism: the inalienable basic

human right to form and join political parties, i.e. freedom of political association.

If the idea of a one-party state is a good one, and if it is worthy of support by Zimbabwean voters, then it must not necessarily be connected with any particular party. The question of *which* party should have a national monopoly of politics has no basis in democracy because there is no one party which should have such status for whatever reason.

As a nation, Zimbabwe does not deserve to be morally burdened and democratically derailed by the PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF 1987 unity agreement if the principal purpose of that unity was to establish a legislated one-party state. Such a purpose is subversive to the present basically sound constitution of the land and is unethical in that it violates perennial tenets of inalienable basic human rights by any standard.

It would therefore be prudent for ZANU-PF to find a better and more enduring basis for unity than the folly of a legislated one-party state which, the party must be assured, has no future whatsoever. Indeed, ZANU-PF stalwarts who fought gallantly for independence should understand that, while the nation is grateful for their role in the liberation struggle, power is not inherited from the past but it is borrowed from the future. A one-party state implemented today, by whatever means and for whatever reasons, will most certainly be dismantled by future generations. Great political parties and great men do not make history by building systems whose writing is on the wall.

Given recent unfortunate developments in Zambia and Kenya in mid-1990, the point must be emphasised that closing modes of political expression through legislation is a recipe for repression and violence. There is no peaceful way of remedying a political monopoly.

Much as it is unreasonable to argue for a one-party state on grounds of national unity, it is equally unreasonable to argue for the idea under the veil of socialism. Socialists who have either been forced or helped, by Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost*, to discover the virtues of pluralism now swear that there never was any historical connection between socialism and a one-party state even though a case clearly exists that Lenin was the architect of the theory of a one-party state because of his passion for the "dictatorship of the proletariat". This was a bad idea whether or not it was distorted by Stalin and his henchmen.

Besides this ideological truism, ZANU-PF should face the consideration that many Zimbabweans who would have readily supported the idea of a one-party state in 1980 because of what was an understandable euphoria

over independence are now self-consciously opposed to the idea because they have experienced ZANU-PF rule which has struck some citizens as a ten-year symphony in mediocrity as far as delivery of public services has been concerned.

The absence of any necessary connection between socialism and a legislated one-party state has obliged some in ZANU-PF to shift from an ideological position in support of a one-party state system to one of political expediency based on the belief that the system is necessary to combat tribalism in order to promote national unity and the belief that the system is true to African tradition in which there is one family and one chief.

The latter argument has been unconvincing because it is empirically false in the context of Zimbabwean culture which has always had many different families and chiefs numbering at least 500 without having a family of families or a chief of chiefs. Cultural and political diversity is uniquely Zimbabwean and many citizens cherish his heritage to a point where it is futile to seek to alter this history on grounds of contrived political expediency. The problem of tribalism, which supporters of a legislated one-party state had alluded to, emerges when it is used against professionalism and equity in an artificial system of national unity. To argue that a one-party state prevents tribalism is a joke in the view of actual experiences derived from all one-party states around us. Since 1988, ZANU-PF has been accused of being dominated by a particular tribal group, sometimes labelled as the committee of 26.<sup>21</sup> If it is true that there is such a committee, who is to say that the present dominant tribe will not further entrench its stronghold of the ruling party in a legislated one-party state?

Other tribes would be efficiently shut out of power should Zimbabwe become a one-party state because they will not have a window of escape when things become sour. One option would be the dreadful option of a military coup d'etat. This threat would not exist in a viable multi-party state in which any disgruntled tribe would have the outlet of forming its own party. In time, every tribe which dreams of forming its own party would come to realise that it cannot form a government alone. In addition to having an incentive for this realisation, a viable multi-party state must have constitutional mechanisms which encourage different groups to cooperate in the formation of political parties in order to have a chance of forming a government.

Some supporters of ZANU-PF have argued that it is wrong to suggest that a one-party state is necessarily undemocratic and that a multi-party state is necessarily democratic; suggesting that the issue is a variable dependent

on economic questions about ownership of the means of production.<sup>22</sup> While it is true that a multi-party state is not necessarily democratic, a case exists that such a state has the necessary ingredients of democratic order. On the other hand, there are no ingredients of democracy in a one-party state. A multi-party state may have democracy whereas a one-party state simply cannot have the same; which is why there is no single example of a one-party state democracy anywhere in the world. All remaining one-party states will vanish sooner or later.

In the context of the Zimbabwean debate, the argument that a one-party state can have democracy suffered a natural fate just before the 1990 general and presidential elections when ZANU-PF held what the party called "primary elections" to select candidates for the general and presidential elections. Despite the fact that the ruling party's constitution entitles any of its members to seek any office in the party, two unpleasant realities emerged during the primary elections.

One was that certain offices were considered out of bounds, notably the office of the President. This was also the case during the PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF December 1989 congress where the offices of the party president and his two vice-presidents were not contested. In the "primary elections" the issue of electing the party's candidate for President was not even suggested because it was taboo. There were other offices which were out of bounds for competition. Didymus Mutasa was quoted in the press as saying that it would be impolite for party members to seek to challenge the party hierarchy for office.<sup>23</sup> This was one reality, the other was that for those party incumbents or favourites who were as unlucky as to go through the indignity of primary elections, the rule of thumb was that primary elections would be held until losers became winners.<sup>24</sup> In cases where this rule could not work, two candidates — the winner and loser in primary elections — were submitted for the general elections.<sup>25</sup> If this can happen in a multi-party state, one can only imagine what the situation would be like in a one-party state.

In order to put the debate on the one-party state in Zimbabwe in its proper context, it is essential that the socio-psychological origins of a modern political party are understood. A one-party state is a social form by which a given governing authority, or one that aspires thereto, attempts to legitimise itself by force. In recent times, several eastern and central European countries — many of which are now rediscovering themselves — opted for this form of legitimation process. The most illuminating example of a "party" form of social order was carried out in China under Mao Tse

Tung which demonstrated that the crux of "party organisation" is psychological in an instrumental fashion that exploits the masses.

All surviving one-party states have been based on the views that the masses will support them in a referendum. Karl Jaspers<sup>26</sup> made two important distinctions between the people and the masses and the public and the masses which demonstrate the poverty of the relationship between one-party states and the masses. In the first instance, the "people is subdivided into orders, is conscious of itself in ways of life, modes of thought and cultural heritage. A people is something substantial and qualitative, it poses a communal atmosphere; the individual from the people has a personal character that is partly derived from the strength of the people by which he is borne".<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, "the mass is not subdivided, is unconscious of itself, uniform and quantitative, devoid of specific character and cultural heritage, without foundations and empty. It is the object of propaganda, destitute of responsibility, and lives at the lowest level of consciousness".<sup>28</sup>

Jaspers argued that masses arise where men come to be without provenance or roots, disposable and exchangeable. In this sense, the masses are related to the public which is the "first step along the path of the transformation of people into mass".<sup>29</sup> One consideration that compels attention on the masses is that, again as Jaspers rightly observed, they do not know or want anything; they are without content a tool for anyone who flatters their universal psychological impulses and passions.<sup>30</sup> For this reason, the masses are easily able to lose the power of deliberation, rush into the intoxication of change for the sake of change, and follow the Pied Piper. Accordingly, it is easy for the conditions of interactions between unreasoning masses and "directing" tyrants to develop.

This is the danger of a one-party state in so far as it can be based on the masses. There cannot be a one-party state based on the people as a self-conscious, sub-divided social entity. In the Zimbabwean debate, it has become a truism that the masses would vote for a one-party state in a referendum. The reasons are not hard to find in the light of the foregoing about the social psychology of the masses which has dominated Zimbabwean politics since the liberation struggle.

To bring about democracy, what is needed in Zimbabwe is a political culture which should move away from the social psychology of the masses to a "people self-consciousness". For this to happen, the national political leadership, as well as the language of political science discourse, must be transformed from the psychology of liberation movements, in the guise of

an anti-imperialist posture, to a culture of governance, i.e., good government. This is the challenge faced by Zimbabwe ten years after independence. The culture of good government should have the following four essential elements:

First, there must be recognition in Zimbabwean politics that any system of government must be based on sound moral values which serve to bind members of the system. However they may be defined, these moral values must make clear the relationship between the *individual* and the *collectivity*. The clarification must be done via a full recognition of the need for individual freedom and dignity. Any social system that does not recognise these values runs every possible risk of tyranny in the name of the masses;

Second, a political system that recognises individual freedom and dignity is better placed to promote *political participation*. That is, the right of individuals to self-determination in the pursuit of their constitutional rights in an open society not subject to monopoly politics;

Third, such political participation is likely to encourage *discussion*, i.e., the right of individuals to engage in critical and informed debate on personal, local, national and other broader issues which affect the individual and his social space without fear or favour;

Fourth, such discussion should promote *rational voting*, i.e., the right of individuals to choose their representatives at various levels of government, under an institutional background which entrenches human freedom and dignity. Rational voting cannot take place in an electoral system based on the "winner take all" principle. A system of proportional representation is necessary as a safeguard against the tyranny of the masses.

Recognising that it takes time for any social system to develop and uphold such values as outlined here, it is necessary for any country to have in place an enabling environment for these values. By and large, Zimbabwe does not yet have in place an enabling environment for democratic governance.

The reasons for this problem are historical and are related to three background values in conflict which make up Zimbabwe's present political culture and which mix in such a way as to diminish the immediate possibility of a democratic civil culture, let alone a democratic government.

First, there is the problem of Zimbabwe's colonial heritage. Colonialism had a dual impact on Zimbabwean political culture. On the one hand, there developed purposively oppressive and racist institutions which dominated African life. On the other, as was pointed out earlier in this chapter, there



existed a contained sub-system of white (settler) political culture with semblances of democracy. In Zimbabwe, the white sub-system was, within itself, more open than, say, the Portuguese system in Mozambique which took its cue from undemocratic Portugal.

At independence, the Zimbabwean nationalist leadership, wittingly or unwittingly, failed to broaden democracy but embraced the oppressive institutions and legal instruments such as the Rhodesian-imposed state of emergency which took ten years to be lifted. The post-independence state also retained former Rhodesian black and white security personnel trained in the abuse of human rights.<sup>31</sup>

Second, the embracing of oppressive colonial institutions and practices by ruling nationalists has tended to dovetail rather neatly with the refuge which the nationalists have sought from the African tradition of obedience to elders. Arguments have been advanced by the nationalists that one-party states with one leader are in conformity with African tradition.<sup>32</sup>

Third, much as the oppressive psychology of colonial institutions combines well with the interpretation of African tradition given by some of the Zimbabwean nationalists leaders, the two combine even better with the heritage of the liberation war which brought political independence to Zimbabwe. Because of social factors inherent to liberation movements we find that there is no single such movement which can be shown to be democratic. Indeed, liberation movements are characterised by a commandist political culture.<sup>33</sup> The recent experiences of Angola, Zimbabwe and Mozambique have shown that, once successful, former liberation movements bring into government a commandist culture which is fundamentally contrary to even rudimentary values of democracy. The quest for a one-party state, although not unique to former liberation movements turned ruling parties, gets a particularly dangerous impetus in a civil society in which the masses are under the spell of a commandist political culture.

These are the background values in conflict which have more or less defined Zimbabwe's political culture ten years after independence. Against such a background, the possibility of democracy is thin and the appeal of tyranny quite high. As a former liberation movement, ZANU-PF requires major transformation in terms of its social psychology from a commandist to a democratic culture.<sup>34</sup> For this to happen there is need for an enabling environment which transcends the confines of past and contemporary nationalist interests which are based on limited views on national unity and democracy. Whatever will be the final outcome of the Zimbabwe debate on

democracy, socialism and the one-party state, it behoves all participants in the debate to consider the rather compelling view that political power is borrowed from the future, not inherited from the past.

## FOOTNOTES

1. This interpretation seemed to be borne out by the consideration that ZANU-PF now seems ready for an internal debate on the one-party state. Doors were opened when President Mugabe publicly admitted that the idea was facing internal opposition and that if the idea was wrong it could only be changed by the party through its structures. See "ZANU-PF Divided Over One-Party State"; *Financial Gazette*, July 13, 1990 and "President Outlines Views on One-Party State"; *The Herald*, July 13, 1990. Reports of division within ZANU-PF on the issue of the one-party state came on the heels of President Mugabe's criticism of his colleagues in the party hierarchy of having an "indifferent attitude towards party principles" such as the leadership code, socialism and the promotion of a one-party state. (See "President Slams Some Leaders", *The Herald*, June 30, 1990.)
2. See Jonathan Moyo, "Delegates Opposing One-Party State Need Ideological Training — Says Party Presidency", *The Financial Gazette*, January 5, 1990 and "No Democratic Country Should Forbid by Law the Existence of Any Party", *The Financial Gazette*, March 30, 1990; see also his "Hostage to Influence: Why Voting on a One-Party State Violates Human Rights" in *Parade Magazine*, July 1990; Cain Mathema, "Marxism-Leninism and the State: Only Socialism Can Meet the Wishes of the People", *The Herald*, January 12, 1990; Louis Masuku, "Beyond Jonathan Moyo's Understanding", *The Sunday Mail*, January 14, 1990; Ibbo Mandaza, "Democracy in the African Reality", *Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly*, February, 1990; Fay Chung, "Socialism is the Only Answer to the Country's Problems", *The Sunday Mail*, March 25, 1990; Kempton Makamure, "One-Party State a Way for Leaders to Secure Permanent Tenure of Office", *The Financial Gazette*, April 6, 1990; and Andries Rukobo, "Concept of Democracy in Current Debate is Very Narrow", *The Financial Gazette*, May 4, 1990; see also his "The Way Forward Via the Socialist Path", *The Herald*, July 18, 1990 and "How ZANU-PF is the Only Guarantee of Democracy", *The Herald*, July 19, 1990.
3. See *The Sunday Mail*, (Harare) May 27, 1989.

4. This type of deference to the President caused a public uproar when, in his maiden speech in the new unicameral Parliament, Tony Gara seemed to equate President Mugabe with Jesus Christ.
5. The most telling opposition has been around questions of corruption and the Leadership Code (e.g. the "Willogate Scandal", the expulsion of Tekere from ZANU-PF in 1988, student activism which led to the closure of the University of Zimbabwe on October 4, 1989 and labour unrests which saw nurses and teachers take to strike action after the 1990 general and presidential elections.)
6. See Rukobo's "How ZANU-PF is the only Guarantee of Democracy", *op. cit.*
7. Many ZANU-PF leaders own properties such as farms and hotels over and above the specifications of the party's Leadership Code which is currently being reviewed by a special committee chaired by Edison Zvobgo, Minister of State for the Public Service.
8. Witness the number of the party's youth and women wings (as well as other peasant Zimbabweans) who line up in front of the South African Trade Mission in pursuit of consumer goods in South Africa for resale in 'socialist' Zimbabwe. Over the last three years, the long lines have become a public embarrassment to "socialist" Zimbabwe.
9. See Jeffrey Herbst's *State Politics in Zimbabwe*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1990, p.260.
10. See Jonathan Moyo, "Delegates Opposing One-Party State Need Ideological Training, Says Party Presidency", *op. cit.*
11. See Herbst, *op. cit.*, pp.166-192.
12. See the 1979 Three-Year Development Plan, Harare: *Government Printers*.
13. See Jonathan Moyo, "Democracy, Socialism and the One-Party State Debate in Zimbabwe" in *Zimbabwe's First Decade of Political Independence: Lessons for Namibia and South Africa* (Jonathan Moyo and Helmut Orbon, eds., Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications [1991]).
14. Hence ZANU-PF and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) have been on a collision course with the labour movement withdrawing support for the ruling party in the 1990 general and presidential elections which were followed by labour unrest in the public service with nurses, teachers and others taking strike action. See "ZCTU stand on Elections still Unchanged", *The Sunday Mail*, March 25, 1990.

15. See Jonathan Moyo, "Zimbabwe: A Critical Appraisal of the ZUM Challenge", *Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly*, August, 1989, p.27. A number of themes in this chapter draw from this piece as well as on this author's earlier piece on "Democracy in Zimbabwe: A Critical Review", *Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly*, February, 1989.
16. See Herbst, *op. cit.*, pp.37-62.
17. See Jonathan Moyo, "Delegates Opposing One-Party State need Ideological Training, Says Party Presidency", *op. cit.*
18. See Jonathan Moyo, "Democracy in Zimbabwe: A Critical Review", *op. cit.*, pp.8-9.
19. *Ibid.*
20. See "Zanu-PF Divided Over One-Party State", *Financial Gazette*, July 13, 1990.
21. See *Africa Confidential*, October 16, 1988.
22. See Rukobo's "How ZANU-PF is the only Guarantee of Democracy", *op. cit.*
23. See *The Sunday Mail*, February 18, 1990.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.* In some constituencies, ZANU-PF candidates who lost primary elections, such as Simbi Mubako in Zaka East, went on to win the general elections.
26. See Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1976.
27. *Ibid.*, p.128.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*, p.129.
30. *Ibid.*, p.130.
31. See "Zimbabwe: A Break with the Past — Human Rights and Political Unity", *Africa Watch*, October, 1989.
32. See Dani Wadada Nabudere's "The One-Party State in Africa and its Assumed Philosophical Roots" in *Democracy and the One-Party State in Africa* (Peter Meyns and Dani Wadada Nabudere, eds.) Hamburg: Institut Fur Afrika-Kunde, 1989; pp.1-12.
33. See Masipula Sithole's "Zimbabwe: In Search of a Stable Democracy" in *Democracy in Developing Countries: Africa* (Diamond, Linz and Lipset, eds.); Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988, p.248. The theme of a commandist culture runs through *Africa Watch's* "Zimbabwe: A Break with the Past — Human Rights and Political Unity"; *op. cit.*

34. In this regard, there have been "commandist" statements which have run the risk of encouraging political violence from ZANU-PF leaders. One such statement was one made by the party's Secretary for Information and Foreign Minister Nathan Shamuyarira in the wake of the conviction of ZANU-PF youths who were found guilty of political violence in Karoi. See *The Herald*, July 16, 1990.

# THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATISATION

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Kempton Makamure

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Dr Jonathan Moyo has argued passionately that ZANU-PF should be dissuaded from going ahead with its December 1989 Party Congress Resolution to create a one-party state by law.<sup>1</sup> He concluded that such an intention presented "a clear and present danger to the possibility of a broad-based democratic system of governance in this country".

This is a conclusion which I am convinced the majority of Zimbabweans, including myself, whole-heartedly agree with. It is also unfortunate that Dr Moyo's contribution on this subject has been the subject of sycophantic and intolerant comment by the ZANU-PF's ideologues in the party-controlled national daily press. I offer my sincere condolences to you Dr Moyo but I am pleased that you have not been intimidated.

Undoubtedly, Jonathan Moyo is a fervent opponent of the one-party state. He has never lost an opportunity to express to his opposition to the ruling party's platform of thinking and plotting the introduction of one-party state government into Zimbabwe. Given the political climate of fear and intimidation which have become the major instruments and means of government by ZANU-PF, Dr Jonathan Moyo has shown moral and intellectual courage that is rare among the petty bourgeoisie intellectual community of the University of Zimbabwe and one may add of the Zimbabwean community as a whole. However, Jonathan Moyo has not escaped the intellectual wrath of ZANU-PF's ideologues who are falling over each other in attacking him. Their key incentive in this rush to dismiss and ridicule Jonathan Moyo's views on the one-party system is to catch the eye of ZANU-PF *chefs* whose party operates a highly successful system of patronage very much the same as that depicted in Sembene Ousmane's novel, *The Last of the Empire*.

The arguments of ZANU-PF's ideologues are a most fascinating show of abstract thinking that is completely and utterly divorced from the reality of Zimbabwe's actual conditions. Reading and talking to anyone of these ideologues is like reading and listening to a *Jehova's Witness*. Their arguments are predictable and dogmatic and although listeners may endure

them, none take them seriously. This is exactly how most honest and thinking Zimbabweans have come to regard ZANU-PF ideologues. But what exactly are their arguments against Jonathan Moyo's views? They are as follows:

1. They premise their thinking and take for granted that ZANU-PF is a Marxist-Leninist movement guided by Marxist leaders who are committed to the socialist transformation of Zimbabwe. They do not challenge the truth or falsehood of these premises nor do they attempt to investigate or address themselves to the reality of ZANU-PF policies and practice.
2. They abstract Marxism-Leninist theses on imperialism, neo-colonialism, democracy, the working class and the evils of capitalism and ascribe to these the basis and motivation of all thinking in ZANU-PF. They do not check whether in fact any single leading cadre in ZANU-PF believes in these theses or even understands them at all.
3. They quickly resort to the oppressive record of colonialists as an excuse once they are challenged about the repression perpetrated under the ZANU-PF government.
4. They fall in the trap of identifying multi-partyism with capitalism.
5. They employ abuse and political label as a substitute for scientific analysis.

The overall result of the works of the ZANU-PF ideologues is that they are taken advantage of by the enemies of Marxism like Dr Jonathan Moyo to portray a ridiculous and false image of the role of Marxism in the development of democracy and democratic institutions in Zimbabwe. As a result, Jonathan Moyo has been preaching from every platform that Marxism-Leninism means the one-party state, the one-party state means ZANU-PF, ZANU-PF means corruption and so on. This trail of thought is as false as it is in practice. It is therefore necessary to explain and expose Dr Moyo's ideas for what they are worth.

However, it must be observed that while we are of the same opinion on the question of the dangers of the one-party rule in Zimbabwe, we must say that Moyo's reasoning is dangerously faulty because it combines a blatant ignorance of basic Marxism and Marxist tenets and a negligent or even deliberate disregard for the truth and historical fact. It is also unfortunate that the reasoning also betrays a streak of Cold War anti-communism which negatively affects his capacity for intellectual honesty.

The factor of the ineptitude and opportunism of ZANU-PF's ideologues and that they are offering such an easy target for Dr Moyo's pen must not

distract us from a very critical analysis of Moyo's ideology and its historically limited democratic essence. Dr Moyo's political ideas are drawn from liberal democratic thought. Their chief tenets are as follows:

First, capitalism as an economic system is based on the principle of free choice and free enterprise;

Second, capitalism is the ideal form of economic organisation that leads to efficient economic management of economic life and resources;

Third, democracy should be defined in terms of the traditional institutions of freedom of property, a multi-party political system, liberty and the pursuit of happiness;

Fourth, Marxist doctrine is inconsistent with democracy;

Fifth, socialist economic planning is inherently inefficient.

By combining his own bias with the credence he affords the assertions of the ideologues of ZANU-PF, Moyo has married unfairly his struggle against one-party rule in Zimbabwe with an undisguised crusade against Marxism. It is therefore Moyo's understanding of ZANU-PF and his misplaced anti-communist crusade that make Moyo's advocacy of democracy misguided and divisive altogether undermining his more genuine intentions to see democratic advance in Zimbabwe. Dr Moyo's thinking on democracy and the one-party state is not only as we have noted above, one-sided and static, but even more seriously, flawed because it is unscientific, abstract and ahistorical. His ideas are indeed fatal weaknesses to his credibility as a scholarly contributor to this great national debate on democracy.

## NO MARXISTS IN ZANU-PF

Dr Moyo assumes wrongly or gives the impression that the movement towards legislating for a one-party state is being spearheaded by "Marxist-Leninists" in ZANU-PF and, also with surprise, observes that such a position contradicts that of other Marxist-Leninists in other countries. The practice of ZANU-PF in the past has amply demonstrated that they have not carried out a single Marxist-Leninist policy although they had the power and every opportunity to do so. Within its own party ranks ZANU-PF has isolated all genuine Marxist-Leninists.

Any scientific analysis of the potentiality and possibility of democratic advance in Zimbabwe must attempt a basic understanding of the nature and politics of ZANU-PF. ZANU-PF was born in 1963 from ZAPU as purely



a national liberation movement. It organised and rallied the oppressed people of Zimbabwe on the basis of anti-colonial grievances. The context within which ZANU-PF developed did not endow it with any revolutionary traditions let alone with scientific Marxist traditions. For example, there was no Communist Party in Zimbabwe and hence no Marxist training of ZANU cadres. Admittedly, the external wing of ZANU under the leadership of Herbert Chitepo, allowed Marxist discussion and expression in the movement. However, this was always peripheral and any assertion of Marxist influence tended to be interpreted as "rebellion" by the traditional nationalist leadership of ZANU. In fact, we observe an interesting trend of development in the 1970s with regard to the position of Marxists in ZANU. In the early and mid-1970s there was intolerance of Marxism especially in a situation where the emphasis was engaging militantly the forces of colonialism when individual Marxists in the movement proved invaluable for their courage, mobilising ability and vision. However, in the late seventies, colonialism was inevitably collapsing and it was a matter of time when it would completely fall. The emphasis in ZANU changed to one of internal power struggles. The Marxists were purged with the most sophisticated political finesse. The wolves 'ate' the sheep but put on their woollen skins to look like the sheep they had devoured. The Herbert Chitepo-groomed leadership perished. The 1963 ZANU leadership re-emerged and labelled itself revolutionary and Marxist because without any doubt the sterling work of individual Marxists in ZANU within the ranks of the fighting forces had had a tremendous impact. No aspiring ZANU leader would publicly pronounce himself a capitalist or a reactionary in front of them. The nationalist leadership grasped this reality quickly and instantly labelled themselves accordingly.

The assumption of national political power in a new independent Zimbabwe by the nationalist leadership in 1980 gave the ZANU-PF nationalists a golden opportunity to come out into their own. They quickly moved to demobilise the militant liberating fighting forces who were soon overtaken by ideological confusion, disorganisation and poverty. The ZANU-PF leadership quickly built strong political alliances with reactionary black elements from the erstwhile Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole collaborators. Further, through the policy of reconciliation, they built economic alliances with the ex-colonial settler bourgeoisie and the international imperialist capitalists. The state apparatus was planned to exclude influential Marxist elements and their sympathisers. The result was that over a period of ten years, a subtle deliberate and black-led capitalist regime was consolidated behind the backs of the black masses who are just not waking up to the fact that their nationalist leaders are not

for them but against them; that the economic oppression of the black people continues; that the neglect of the people in the rural areas goes on as before; that the cultural oppression of the black people continues; and, that the dignity of the black people is still denied as it was under colonialism. The hopes for a mass democratic advance that was the promise of independence in 1980 now lies buried in the ruins of betrayed mass aspirations. Neo-colonialism and imperialism now roam happily the fatherland under a new and well-fitting guise namely a willing black leadership

If it is not Marxists-Leninists who are spearheading the drive for one-party rule in Zimbabwe, then who is doing so? As a social and political scientist Dr Moyo should point out and identify that the drive for one-party rule is coming from old-time nationalists who see politics as a lucrative means of livelihood and accumulation. Therefore a one-party state would secure what we know in commercial or legal language as "permanent tenure" in their current positions. It is on this premise that one explains the existence of the tired and bankrupt political system in Zambia, the brutal political regime in Malawi and the tyrannical and murderous political dictatorship in Kenya. We need also to point out that feudal capitalism often results in dangerous anti-democratic spin-offs, namely, military capitalistic dictatorship such as that of Babangida in Nigeria, Mobutu in Zaire, the Lekanya regime in Lesotho and the late Sergeant Doe in Liberia.

The one-party state is a symbol of the democratic decay of the nationalist movement after independence. Brought to power by popular sentiment at the time of independence, the nationalists betrayed the people by abandoning the mass programme of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle. Slowly the masses understood their neglect through the medium of increasing hardships and the surrender to vice and corruption on the part of their nationalist leaders. Their links and ties with the people diminished and proportionately increased with the imperialist bosses. The tell-tale signs for this disenchantment were the lone voices of the African intelligentsia on behalf of the people in novels such as T. M. Aluko's *Chief, the Honourable Minister*; Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*; Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* and Sembene Ousmane's *The Last of the Empire*.

Having severed the links with the people and thereby having lost all genuine popular support, the African nationalist leaders have had to resort to the use of armed force, police brutality, prisons and often times the murder of African democrats by semi-official or even official death squads in order to remain in power. This rule by political terror has had to be justified in law and in political theory. In law, independence constitutions were amended to

do away with multi-party democracy. Henceforth after the imposition of one-party rule, the nationalists in power would not be bothered to attend to people's needs through periodical elections as the one-party law offered legal justification.

In political theory, this authoritarianism was justified by the revival of the feudal theory of government. It was officially argued that singular authority government suited the African's nature best; that in any case the old African kings and chiefs sustained their monolithic governments by a variety of means of popular political participation; that multi-partyism was a colonial imposition; that the leaders of the nationalist movement, upon the achievement of independence, became political messiahs whose political leadership was *sacro sanctitas* and could not be challenged by lesser mortals who formed opposition parties after independence. It was further argued in political theory that the multi-ethnic nature of African populations would lead to national disintegration as political parties would inevitably be formed on the basis of ethnic and regional loyalties. It was finally argued that democracy was to be maintained through a multi-candidate but single-party electoral system.

In practice, the feudalisation of government led to the development of an all-embracing patronage system under the control of the leader and his nationalist hangers-on. Loyalty and praise-singing to the leader became the all important criterion for success in politics instead of capacity for vision and critical advance. Positions in the state systems also became feudalised and incumbents in all key positions were clients of the leader's Ministers. The clientele system soon sank into outright nepotism and corruption as the African economies contracted and offered very few jobs for the growing population. Even the new multi-candidate single party electoral system collapsed because it sometimes allowed the election of mass-oriented radicals and those who exposed the corruption in the system and championed the demands of the masses. These elements were "disciplined" and "thrown out of the party".<sup>2</sup>

Under ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, the feudalisation of both party and government has matured with such rapidity unknown elsewhere in Africa. Political positions in the party Central Committee and the Politburo are held on the strength of the combined patronage of the President and his two Deputies. Provincial party leaders are subject to the patronage of the various ministerial bosses and the district party leaders are subject to the patronage of the provincial party bosses.

In government and parastatals, key positions and promotion to those positions are not based on merit but again express the all-embracing inner web of patronage revolving around the President and his ministers. Key personnel in state administration and in parastatals or indeed any other state run institutions also operate personnel and recruitment policies on the basis of local webs or mini-patronage systems.

But this feudalisation is taking place in the context of a Zimbabwe that has a highly developed capitalist economy controlled by white settlers and transnational corporations. Africa is still a key raw material source and a market for European, Japanese and American industrial wares. Doing business in post-colonial Africa for imperialist businessmen requires them to adjust to the feudalised and highly personalised politics of Africa. These businessmen have, therefore, developed the method of "greasing", meaning the practice of bribing African leaders and top officials. Once the "greasing" system has been established, big European businesses find it in their political interest to support their client African leaders in positions of influence and power.

The overall consequence has, therefore, been that African political systems have developed to express the interests of two authoritarian forces allied in their opposition to the popular will of the African people. These forces are the foreign European and American big business and the post-independence nationalist leadership. The unity of these forces is expressed in the authoritarian feudal capitalist regimes of almost all independent African countries Zimbabwe being the latest member.

In Zimbabwe, the structure of authoritarianism is as follows. The President personally decides everything and ministers make decisions without consulting the President at their own peril. No minister can possess and express an independent popular base. Edgar Tekere tried and was thrown out. Edison Zvobgo, the populist from Masvingo province attempted to use his popular base in Masvingo to his advantage in both party and government ranking but was savagely brought to book. Humiliated and demoted in both party and government positions, Zvobgo soon learnt to behave himself and has since seen his political fortunes rise. Another politician who could be said to have had a popular base was Herbert Ushewokunze whose bold Africanisation policies appealed and appeased Africans soon after independence. He expressed himself too independently hoping that his national popular appeal would make him invulnerable from political demotion. He was mistaken. He was sacked, re-hired, demoted and humiliated. He has since been rehabilitated after he learnt to behave himself. Thus, the basic political law of Zimbabwe at present is that

everything must be done with or by the authority of the President. This explains the weak, biased and uncreative decision-making process within the Zimbabwean state.

Beside the system of Presidential patronage, the other structure of authoritarianism in Zimbabwe's politics is the media which is controlled and almost monopolised by government. Through a highly malleable and obedient journalistic fraternity, the Zimbabwe media shields political leaders from public scrutiny and accountability. Only two independent monthlies and a businessmen's weekly provoke some limited public debate on the nation's politics and its leaders.

The third structure of political authoritarianism is the highly patronised civil service. The most vivid expression of this is the state security police — the CIO which defines its points of reference not as the overall security of the Zimbabwean state and people but as the political security of ZANU-PF. It has been transformed from a security organisation to an organ of political intimidation.

The fourth structure of authoritarianism is the ZANU-PF Youth and Women's Leagues. Through selective intimidation of individuals in community and well-timed political witch-hunting orgies, whole communities are forced to submit to the authority of ZANU-PF and to shun any or all association with opposition groups or individuals.

The fifth structure of authoritarianism is the existence of a weak parliament. The Parliament of Zimbabwe is far from being a "Grand Inquisition" for the nation. It spends almost all its time listening to its members individually paying homage to the President of the country. It is highly patronised and individual members do not possess an independent political base let alone a popular one. A large proportion of the MPs are also either ministers or deputy ministers and twelve are nominees of the President, negating completely the concept of Parliament as an independent institution from government.

The sixth structure of authoritarianism is weak ministers. They constitute a private club of highly isolated and highly vulnerable politicians. Their political fortunes precariously hang on how much and how far they are able to please the President. Their hatred for the people stems from their inferiority complex and hence their propensity to support armed repressions against the people.

There is yet another condition that aids the development of authoritarianism in Zimbabwe. There is no tradition of internal democratic struggle. All talk about democracy is still largely theoretical and schemed

from Western textbooks on democratic theory. People become democrats and sensitive to breaches of democracy only when they have fought and wrested democratic rights from their own dictators. There is no such depth and strength of feeling against fascists in Zimbabwean politics. The only strong feelings capable of being evoked are the anti-white and anti-colonial feelings. However, such feelings do not lead to a general democratic understanding. They may actually be used for precisely the opposite situation. ZANU-PF has used those feelings of the people for backward, if not reactionary, causes. Therefore, the lack of democratic traditions in our new country underlies our present political system. But how can these democratic traditions be built? Only through struggle and the heroism of democratic martyrs who must be tireless in teaching the people to fight and defend their rights.

Most of us would have been happier if Dr Moyo had been able to point out this ideological basis for the drive for one party dictatorship in the Patriotic Front. The failure on his part to do so leaves the democratic movement in Zimbabwe without a compass or a measure of which forces are working to destroy the process of democratic advance in Zimbabwe. Dr Moyo and others of his thinking should expose the dangers of feudal-capitalism and realise that their anti-Marxist crusade is divisive besides constituting a completely false trail in the fight for democracy in Zimbabwe.

## MARXIST-LENINISTS AND DEMOCRACY

Dr Moyo rightly challenges the genuine Marxist-Leninists when he asks us the following question: "Do Marxist-Leninists in Zimbabwe support a legislated one-party state?" After all the distortions and false and mischievous identification of Marxist-Leninists with ZANU-PF's *one-party state objectives*, one is only too happy to have our position clarified in relation to the democratic struggle in Zimbabwe today. Dr Moyo, let us assure you that no genuine Marxist-Leninist supports a legislated one-party state in Zimbabwe! But why is this our position?

Right from its foundation by its fathers Marx and Engels, scientific socialist thought has always been deeply rooted in democratic and *supremely* humanistic ideas. In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels state quite strongly that the first task of the working class and its party is to "win the battle of democracy". Vladimir Lenin, the founder of the Soviet Republic also strongly emphasized that,

Whoever wants to reach socialism by any other party than that of political democracy will inevitably arrive at conclusions that are absurd and reactionary both in the economic and political sense.

Lenin further added:

It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding or overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, in the same way as they can be no victorious socialism that does not practise full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy.

It is for this deep-rooted ideological commitment to democracy that the history for the struggle for democracy by all of mankind in the last century and in the present age cannot be written without acknowledging the heroism in that struggle of Marxist-Leninists. Everywhere the Marxists were always in the most dangerous front ranks of the democratic fighters. Trade union rights and the system of social security in Western Europe are unthinkable without the determined struggle of Marxists who pushed capitalist systems to make concessions that have made life more tolerable for the working people of those countries. Then came the struggle against world fascism in the 1930s and 1940s. The world must know and acknowledge that it was the various national communist-led partisan armies that constantly hit the underbelly of fascist armies during the second world war making it possible for the allied victory over Hitler to be scored and thus saving the world from scourge of German fascism. Thanks to the communists that the world was freed from fascism.

Then came the anti-colonial struggle. The world and everyone must acknowledge that it was the communists who gave moral and material support for the worldwide democratic struggle for decolonisation.

We also wish to ask Dr Moyo to look at the democratic struggle of the people of Latin America. In Brazil, Argentina, Nicaragua, Colombia and Chile, the Marxists led the democratic struggle against the U.S.-sponsored military juntas of these countries. Thousands disappeared and thousands more were tortured and murdered by the "death squads" of those military juntas. Later, the Marxists were joined by progressive Christians and other democratic organisations but they paid the highest price in the struggle for democracy. In many Third World countries it is the Marxist-Leninists who fill the political jails and the torture chambers where the torturers and police prosecutors are ironically trained by the "democracies" of the USA and its allies.

Closer to home in apartheid South Africa, it is not the capitalist liberals who have paid the ultimate price in struggling for democracy in that country but it is the Marxists who have been the kingpin of the anti-apartheid struggle and such names as Albert Nzula, J. B. Marks, Moses Kotane, Bram Fischer, Ruth First, Kathrada, Mbeki, Moses Mabidha and Joe Slovo occupy

the sacred places in the roll of honour of anti-apartheid fighters. On the contrary, capitalist liberals did virtually nothing to fight apartheid. Of course, now, they join the bandwagon because the going is easier and safer!

In Zimbabwe, last year, three Zimbabwean Marxists, one intellectual and two trade unionists, were held in prison without charge for their democratic stance. Dr Moyo can be sure that the ZANU-PF government and its security police, the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), does not really worry much about bourgeois liberal democrats like himself but keeps files and a constant check on the Marxist democrats.

In Kenya, Malawi and Zambia, the tyrannical one-party dictatorships have been supported by big capitalists operating in those countries. On important anniversaries of those countries' dictators the big capitalists take out large advertising space in the national dailies to sing songs of praise to those respective dictators. We in Zimbabwe and Dr Moyo must take particular note of this. It means that if ZANU-PF imposes its dictatorship, we cannot rely on the big capitalists to support the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. They will be definitely on the side of repression as they are in Kenya, Malawi, Zambia and apartheid South Africa. This means that the greatest danger facing the democratic struggle in Zimbabwe is the nascent and growing alliance between the nationalists and big capital. The one-party state would be based on that alliance.

Dr Jonathan Moyo finds it easy to talk about democracy particularly in relation to its most obvious violators, the African authoritarian regimes. In the same simplistic manner he prescribes the multi-party system together with the capitalist political economy as the answer to the achievement of democracy for the African people. His superficial approach to the question of democracy is flawed and could divert and ruin both the quest for democracy in Africa and its achievement. Dr Moyo thinks like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin of the American revolution that created the present American system of "democracy". These were men who preached liberty, equality and the pursuit of happiness as natural and God-given but who in practice were slave masters over our fellow Africans brought to America during the slave trade. The liberty and equality and the pursuit of happiness which they preached with such fervour and militant commitment was not liberty and equality for their black slaves but liberty and equality for European whites and white capitalists of America particularly. The democracy that Moyo preaches is not democracy for the peasant masses nor for the labouring masses of our cities but democracy for the rich and the well-to-do Zimbabweans. Moyo has not spoken for the workers who face an acute housing crisis in our cities



Neither has he argued for democracy at work for the hundreds of thousands of our exploited working class. He only speaks out against the political monopoly of ZANU-PF when its ministers threaten to extend this political monopoly into jobs for the civil service.

The popular definition of democracy is "government of the people, by the people and for the people". Despite their multi-party political systems the present capitalist democracies do not meet this criterion of democracy in the broadest and truest sense of the word. An English political scientist, D. W. Brogan, described the so-called democratic constitution of the U.S.A. as an enshrinement of the interests of the propertied classes. Here is how he sums up the American bourgeois democratic revolution, its character and its constitution:

It is against this background of alarmed revolutionary conservatism that the constitution should be considered. It is, if not a counter-revolutionary document, at any rate a terminus to a revolution. Its sponsors were members of the class called by Albert Vandal, 'revolutionaires nantis' revolutionaries in possession, and they had no intention of being dispossessed by the Jacobins of their time.

The constitution was their way of digging themselves in, of consolidating their personal and class gains. It is, as it was intended to be, a conservative instrument, a happier Directory, a consulate with Bonaparte or, to take a closer parallel, it was a spiritual child of the English Revolution of 1688.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, American democracy, just like the English democracy, is democracy for the capitalist class. This cannot be otherwise and it should be the duty of Dr Moyo to make this even clearer if his discipline of political science, is not to be "applied" science "in the service" of the bourgeoisie.

History and mankind have known about democracy since the earliest ancient times. The ancient Greek city state is cited time and time again as the birthplace of democracy. But we will find that historians admit that this was not democracy for all but a limited democracy only for a "charmed circle of the privileged" while on the other hand the rest of the citizens and the slaves who did the work of the community had no voice whatever in the making of the laws under which they toiled. The "democracy" of the Greek city-state was therefore in the strict sense no democracy at all.

Similarly, if we move further down the path of history, we shall get to the English "Magna Carta" of 1216 A.D. This was yet another "democratic" constitution. But it did not permit democracy for all. It prescribed democracy only for another "charmed circle of the privileged" namely the English barons — the feudal lords.

Again if we move further into English political history, we will come across the Charter of Rights of 1688 when the English bourgeoisie finally overthrew feudal dictatorship and ushered in the modern capitalist

government of Parliamentary democracy. Here "democracy" existed only for the victorious bourgeoisie.

Even the English bourgeois franchise has not *always been* universal: it was only extended to the newcomers, the industrial capitalists, in 1832, to the middle classes in 1867, to working class males in 1883 and to women above the age of 28 in 1928 and to both men and women above the age of 18 about 20 years ago.

The existence of a universal franchise is not even in the slightest degree, the real expression of democracy. A capitalist political system with a universal franchise is like an auction — it always falls to the hammer of the highest bidder. For this reason the capitalists everywhere have been extremely comfortable with the universal franchises, because the political power of the capitalist in these circumstances "reside in his pocket", which buys the popular vote.

Ralph Miliband, an authority in the capitalist state, dismissed as a misconception a popular view fashionable among the capitalist intelligentsia such as is Dr Moyo's, that the advanced Western countries are already "democratic" societies to which the notion of "ruling class" or "power elite" is irrelevant. Miliband argues strongly that this is a pluralist-democratic view of society, of politics and of the state in regard to the countries of advanced capitalism, which is wrong. He states that "this view, far from proving a guide to reality, constitutes a profound obfuscation of it".<sup>4</sup>

The following is how Miliband sums up the reality of capitalist democracy to which Dr Moyo wishes Zimbabwe to aspire:

The most important political fact about advanced capitalist societies . . . is the continued existence in them of private and ever more concentrated economic power. As a result of that power, the men — owners and controllers — in whose hands it lies, enjoy a massive preponderance in society, in the political system and in the determination of the state's policies and actions . . .

Similarly, it is the capitalist context of generalised inequality in which the state operates which basically determines its policies and actions. The prevalent view is that the state, in these societies, can be, and indeed mostly, is the agent of a "democratic" social order with no inherent bias towards any class or group; and that its occasional lapse from 'impartiality' must be ascribed to some accidental factor external to its 'real' nature. But this too is fundamental misconception: the state in these class societies is primarily and inevitably the guardian and protector of the economic interests which are dominant in them. Its 'real' purpose and mission is to ensure their continued predominance, not to prevent it.<sup>5</sup>

In describing and characterising the law of motion of the politics of Western type regimes, Miliband also observed as follows:

The point is not that bourgeois "democracy" is imminently likely to move towards old-style fascism. It is rather that advanced capitalist societies are subject to strains more acute than for a long time past, and that their inability to resolve these strains makes their evolution towards more or less pronounced forms of conservative authoritarianism more rather than less likely.

It is this perception of reality, of the limited nature of democracy under capitalism which lies at the base of the communist view of the democratic struggle. Communists stand to expand the frontiers of democratic expression and practice far beyond those currently prescribed by the capitalist political economy. In general, as long as the factories, the land and the mines, the newspapers and public meeting places are privately owned, the working people only enjoy a highly limited democracy and are subject to enormous degrees of social and political dictatorship. The working man and woman is told by the employer when he may earn a living and under what conditions. The working people as a whole are unable to afford to own newspapers, schools, public meeting halls and always and everywhere are at the mercy of the continual propaganda of the bourgeoisie. The government and all the other apparatus of the state are all too subject to the control of property owners. For all these reasons the slogan of communists and for scientific socialists is "defend and extend democracy".

Defending democracy means defending those traditional institutions of democracy won over the ages even in limited democratic environments such as those of slavery, of feudalism and of capitalist democracy. These traditional institutions of democracy are: universal suffrage, free and regular elections; representative institutions, right of free speech, right of association, right of free criticism, equality before the law, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary. These have to be defended because under conditions of monopoly capitalism and of neo-colonialism, the political tendency of capitalist regimes is either to resort to fascism as in Malawi and Kenya or its less acute form, conservative authoritarianism epitomised by the Ronald Reagan regime in the USA, or the Thatcher regime in the UK. Dr Jonathan Moyo obviously does not appreciate this, hence his unreal childish credulity about the virtues of capitalist democracy. We communists insist on truth and intellectual honesty!

Extending democracy means fighting for and establishing full working class participation in the political and economic life of society. Full democracy is denied to the working people in capitalist and neo-colonial societies. Expanding democracy in these societies means allowing them rights of unbridled participation in economic, cultural and political life. Owners and shareholders in financial and the industrial monopolies must be predominantly organised workers. Land use must be democratised

through the abolition of the institution of private ownership of land. Simultaneously in political life, working people must be permitted full and direct participation by granting freedom of political organisation and propaganda to the political parties of the working classes. Such an extension of democracy is what is called socialist democracy and it is a superior and higher form of democracy than anything known or experienced in capitalist society.

Socialist democracy is a great historical advance for mankind when it is fully established. But it would be utopian to think that socialist democracy is achieved simultaneously with the seizure of political power by the working class. The socialist revolution is immediately caught up between two forces which limit the evolution of socialist democracy. One of these forces is the efforts of the defeated capitalist classes both at the national and international level to reverse the socialist struggle and restore capitalism. In that sense the armed and cold war crusades against socialist-revolutions have undermined quick democratic advances in countries of socialist revolution. The other force is socialist bureaucracy which develops in the process of socialist transformation and which becomes relatively autonomous from the working class and sometimes substituting itself as the leader of the working class.

Socialist democracy has to overcome both these negative forces to fully establish itself. The current struggles and upheavals in Eastern Europe and in China manifest this problem. Socialist democracy will only be established if the efforts at capitalist restoration are defeated and if the government bureaucracy is overcome and subjected to the democratic will of the working people. The upheavals in Eastern Europe are therefore historically peculiar to countries of socialist revolution and Dr J. Moyo is completely mistaken when he propagates the idea that they manifest the failure of socialism. Dialectical struggle is the motive force of social progress and socialist society is not immune from the laws of dialectics.

Dr Moyo's advocacy for democracy falls flat on its face and is blessed with an element of hypocrisy when he fails to emphasise the role and part that is played by the Zimbabwean working class. Only the working class in Zimbabwe has consistently been leading the democratic struggle. Zimbabwe's political history shows that it was the working class that was the founder and foundation of the mass democratic nationalist movement against colonial domination.

Again the political history of the post-independent Zimbabwe is instructive as to the historical role of the working class in Zimbabwe. It is the class

which has consistently fought for the democratisation of our new country. Even now the working class has been more clear in its opposition to the one-party state. On May Day 1990 the ZCTU proclaimed in their banners and told the President of the Republic to his face that they were opposed to his plans for a one-party state. But Dr Jonathan Moyo's capitalist class prevaricates and speaks in political mumbo-jumbo. At their 1990 Congress, the employers club, the Confederation of Zimbabwean Industries did not unequivocally oppose the one-party state idea but only said, "Time was not ripe for the introduction of the one-party rule."

Thus we in Zimbabwe today stand in a situation where the working class is the vanguard for political liberty and for democratic institutions. The position is incontrovertible. The working class is spurring on all other democratic elements in our society. It is pushing the liberals towards the political radicals and the radicals towards a revolutionary socialist perspective for a new democracy in Zimbabwe. Without fully recognizing and activating the political and economic potential of the working class in Zimbabwe all talk about democracy and pluralism is cheap political chatter for the amusement of the capitalist classes.

In the last five years we have witnessed a steady erosion of basic 'bourgeois' democratic rights. The working class was recently being governed, until mid-1990, by labour regulations in the form of the *Emergency Powers Regulations Statutory Instrument 160 A* which legally outlawed all democratic struggle by the working class. We have also seen the restriction of free journalism in our country and hence the negation of freedom of expression. The freedom of association is now threatened because as soon as one-party rule is imposed, it will be the end of what still remains of it given the experience of ZUM in less than one year of its existence. The freedom of ideas and free thought has clearly been threatened by the closure of the university and the constant threat of detention and harassment which both students and lecturers face. We have also seen a steady threat to the independence of the judiciary and the future independence of the judiciary can be said to hang on a perilously thin string. While these erosions of basic rights have been taking place we have seen no act of protest from the capitalist associations who seem more than happy to go along with these erosions so long as their profits are not threatened. Only the ZCTU, university students and some Christian organisations, have taken a stand. It is for us Marxists now quite ironic that even those 'bourgeois' freedoms and rights which the bourgeoisie fought to establish cannot be defended by them but have to be defended by Marxist-Leninists. Our Marxists cannot, as matters stand now, afford to put forward socialist demands as this would

be a luxury. They have to go back and defend basic 'bourgeois' democratic rights in the interest of all sections our society, capitalists included!

But what do we as Marxists see as the immediate content of the democratic struggle in Zimbabwe? Without being exhaustive we see the following as forming the agenda for democracy in Zimbabwe:

- Freedom of Association including the right to form capitalist and Marxist opposition political parties.
- Freedom of Expression which must include the freedom and security of individual journalists. We insist on full *glasnost*, i.e. 'openness', in the conduct and accountability of leaders and public officers.
- Free and Fair electoral process. We have sadly noticed that our elections are open to physical threats and intimidation. The spectre of aggressive ZANU-PF youths and women openly fighting defensive ZUM youths was the ugliest aspect of our recent election. Never again should Zimbabwe encourage 'Al Capone' type political gangsterism.
- Free and strong Trade Unions. Democracy in our society is impossible unless and until all laws restricting the operations of Trade Unions are abolished.
- Free Access to Land. We believe that every Zimbabwean who wishes to make a living from land or to build himself a dwelling should have full and legally unimpeded access to the land that is reasonably sufficient for the purpose that he requires it.
- The Right to full legal protection of all citizens and residents in Zimbabwe particularly the right to a professional police force which is not impeded or corrupted by political interference as at present.
- The Right to state support of the Zimbabwean individual, collective or socialist business enterprise as the only way to the building of a national economy that is geared to uphold the living standards of the people.
- The Right to an efficient and accountable public service. Our Civil Service must strictly abide, by the criteria of merit dedication and loyalty to the people.
- All political crimes must be abolished except of course treason and anti-democratic practices such as racism and fascism.
- The Right to an independent and accessible legal profession supported by an objectively independent judiciary.

We believe the above is the basic minimum agenda for the building of a strong democratic political culture in Zimbabwe. Marxists are genuine and firm on this agenda. We can only ask liberal democrats like Dr Jonathan Moyo to desist from their misguided anti-communism, to respect the truth, and join hands with us allies in struggle for a democratic Zimbabwe in which its various national groupings and political groups can live in peace and security without fear of political, religious, racial or ethnic repression. We also assert in the tradition of our philosophy and political thought that: "Democracy is the wholesome and pure air without which a socialist organism cannot live a full blooded life."

#### FOOTNOTES

1. See J. Moyo, "No Democratic Country Should Forbid by Law the Existence of Any Party", *The Financial Gazette*, 30 March, 1990.
2. We have been seeing a lot of it in Zimbabwe but its worst expression was in Kenya where MPs elected on the multi-candidate singly-party system were imprisoned like Shikuku and others or killed like J. Kariuki. In Kenya even the secret ballot system was abolished and a uniquely undemocratic system of lining up behind contestants was introduced to stop radicals being elected to parliament.
3. See D. W. Brogan, *The American Political System*, London, 1933, p.116.
4. R. Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society*, London, 1976, p.6.
5. *Ibid.*, pp.237-8.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# MISPLACED EMPHASIS IN THE DEMOCRACY DEBATE

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Andries Matenda Rukobo

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The last two years in Zimbabwe have witnessed a growing debate on topical, social political and economic issues. This has involved MPs, scholars, businessmen and members of the public, *inter alia*. Since 1989, however, the major vocal section of this debate has focused on the question of democracy and the one-party state. Broadly speaking, those who have monopolised the debate have argued that democracy in Zimbabwe is gradually being eroded. Likewise, the one-party state, which has been argued for by ZANU-PF, has been viewed as an instrument signalling the demise of democracy. The general thrust of the debate has advocated multi-party democracy along Western, liberal lines.

While raising some issues of fundamental importance, the debate has sometimes tended to be characterised by misplaced emphasis. For one thing, the conception of democracy is very restrictive and formalistic, concerned as it is, primarily with party political systems. Hence, democracy is reduced to either the multi-party system or the one-party system. One system is equated with democracy and the other with dictatorship, and sometimes with fascism. For another, voting, freedoms of association, assembly, belief and speech are then posited as the ingredients of democracy. In other words, political activity and practices are considered the life-and-death issues.

A corollary of this argument is that the free enterprise system, or capitalism, is a guarantee for democracy. Part of the justification for arguing for the "free market system" are the real or imagined problems of centrally planned, socialist systems in parts of Eastern Europe.

The debate, therefore, is not only about political democracy, but about which development option Zimbabwe should follow. In this respect the debate has assumed a clear ideological dimension. As a result, one cannot, in attempting to participate in that debate, avoid the ideological question. Clearly, the argument for liberal economy sees democracy as feasible only under capitalism.

This chapter argues differently. It argues that though individual rights and freedoms are central to any democratic order, they do not, however,



constitute the essence of democracy. Instead, the economic question should be posed first in the discussion of democracy. In other words, democracy should not, and cannot, be confined to the liberal definition of individual rights and freedoms. By calling for the free enterprise system the liberal argument is essentially advocating for bourgeois democracy. Put differently, the argument for political rights and freedoms, without a corresponding argument for a socio-economic system which extends these to all the social classes in our society, is ideologically based.

But any serious discussion of democracy in Zimbabwe cannot ignore the reality of the post-colonial situation, and the economic domination of the country by imperialism. At a general level, the feasibility of democratising the society lies in successfully struggling against that domination. More specifically, socialism as a political and economic system, provides a solid alternative to that domination. Nevertheless, given the realities of the current situation, this chapter argues for the creation of a national economy as a strategy for reducing imperialist domination. The questions of imperialism on the one hand, and socialism on the other, are not closed issues. They are relevant as they were, before *perestroika* came about.

## ISSUES IN DEMOCRACY

In the current debate, multi-partyism and democracy, are taken implicitly as one thing. The other issue, only discussed circumstantially, is the economic system.

### Political Systems

There is no clarity on what constitutes democracy and what does not in the current debate. Only an aspect of democracy, the rights of individuals, is projected as democracy. The content and practice of democracy is never fully addressed. Equally, the obligations and responsibilities of individuals and other political parties are never the subject of discussion. Only ZANU-PF has been subjected to examination and analysis. In consequence, everyone else and all other political parties, except those in ZANU-PF itself are presented as pro-democracy and the vehicle for the salvation of Zimbabwe. As the ruling party, there is a justification in constantly keeping the flashlight on ZANU-PF. But to present all forces — reactionary, fascist and remnants of racism — as democratic simply because they are not ZANU-PF, defies social reality. Equally, to protect other political parties from objective scrutiny does not throw light on the reality. It is important,

for example, that different political parties and organisations be assessed and characterised to enable us to determine who has and does not have the capacity to struggle for and uphold democratic principles and practices.

Liberal scholarship argues that the freedom of association, assembly, speech and belief are best guaranteed under a multi-party system. Also, that the multi-party system ensures a degree of choice from plurality of opinion, and acts as a check on unbridled misuse and abuse of power. And that, in any case, competition among those contending for power creates a healthy environment, and ensures that the incumbents do their best to implement their programmes.

But democracy should go beyond the rights and freedoms of the mainly urban-based bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. Clearly, competition among the elite may be facilitated by a multi-party system. Similarly, under such a system the elite will have freedoms and rights. But these remain confined to the elite,<sup>1</sup> in wider sense, therefore, this does not amount to democracy.

The definition of democracy in terms of the multi-party systems is not only ahistorical, but is class-based. It is essentially a spirited defence and legitimisation of capitalism throughout the whole world. Hence Zimbabwe is judged against Western Europe and North America, and explicitly against the real or perceived problems of socialism in Eastern Europe. As a result, the issue of democracy is conveniently used to attempt to bring capitalism through the back door. In other words, we are witnessing a return to the Cold War, in a new way. The intensity of Western propaganda against Eastern Europe and socialism in this age of *perestroika* and *glasnost* is part of that war. Evidently, despite the so-called rapprochement, the West is agog with excitement, and everywhere people are singing requiems for socialism. The hysteria and frenzy are no different from the Cold War, except that now the West is in jubilation. This notwithstanding, the multi-party systems in Western Europe and North America developed in definite historical conditions as a response to certain social and economic processes, of which Zimbabwe was not a part. Zimbabwe is historically and geographically not part of that Western World, even though it is part of the world. The cultural, historical and political development of Zimbabwe should be the firm basis upon which we make our analysis of our own problems. North American, British, French or German "democracies" are not replicas of each other. Each one of them reflects the historical processes that brought it about. Zimbabwe's version of democracy will naturally arise principally from internal historical, political and social processes.

There is a strange formula characteristic of the current debate. This relates to the question of the one-party state. It is as follows: One-Party State = lack of democracy; Multi-Party System = democracy. This looks suspiciously neat and flawless. Beyond the point the multi-party system allows a degree of choice, and the right to elect into or out of office. There is no other plausible explanation. The multi-party system in Western Europe and North America operates within the capitalist system, a system to which all the consequential parties in the UK, Western Europe and North America adhere to. In other words, power circulates between Conservatives and Labourites in the UK and Democrats and Republicans in the U.S.A. These are political parties essentially committed to capitalism and receive their financial, material and political support from the elite. Their attitude towards socialism and colonialism, except for nuances, is basically the same. Not long ago communists were considered undesirable elements, and conditions for their existence were made extremely painful.

However democratic they might pretend, the ruling classes in Western Europe and North America will fight tooth and nail to maintain capitalism in their countries. They will not, in the name of democracy, allow full-blown socialism. Until quite recently, the "democracies" of the West were characterised by virulent anti-communist campaigns referred to by Kempton Makamure.<sup>2</sup> This is not only borne out by the post-World War II Cold War, to which the major political parties contributed, but by the euphoric exhilaration prevalent these days as a result of developments in Eastern Europe. But the attention is also turning to Africa, for the Africans to mould themselves in the image of the West. As long as Western Europe colonised Africa, the issue of democracy was not relevant, but now it is.

And it is a fallacy to regard a multi-party system as necessarily democratic. For while the right to private property may be guaranteed in the capitalist West, the right to employment is not. So, democracy in the liberal sense essentially implies the defence, promotion and protection of the capitalist system, and the domination of the world by imperialism. The rights and privileges of the propertied classes and their perpetual subjugation of the dispossessed classes and the developing countries are important components of capitalism. Political parties in Western Europe are agreed about one thing: the defence of privilege *vis-à-vis* the workers in their own countries, and the developing world globally. Multi-partyism is, therefore, a system allowing for the circulation and change of bourgeois-oriented leadership at periodic intervals. Such change does not lead to any fundamental re-ordering of society or property relations. A multi-party system is a gentlemen's agreement among parties in agreement over the

role of each given political party. This does not extend to changes meant to overthrow capitalism and its replacement with socialism.

A major question, however, is whether liberal democracy would make sense in a situation where the economy and society are dominated by transnational capital. That is, is it feasible to implement liberal democracy under imperialist domination? What, for example, is the socio-economic base for the emergence, growth and development of genuine political parties in the greater part of Africa? It is empirically correct to argue that where multi-party systems have functioned in the Third World, this has been those countries, like India, which have successfully reduced foreign domination and created a national economy. Political parties and social groups in these societies are constituted around clear economic interests and class alliances. In Africa, on the other hand, because of the unstable character of the petty bourgeoisie, alliances have tended to be shifty and spurious.

The question of ideology and that of the socio-economic development path for Zimbabwe are important for democracy. The struggle for a democratic order should be rightly linked to the establishment of socialism, which system is the one that can guarantee justice for the majority and not only the minority. Socialism is appealing because it provides the framework for confronting imperialism, and extending democracy beyond the elite, to the peasants and the workers.

There are certain factors that militate against liberal democracy in Africa. One factor is lack of maturity, and the other one is underdevelopment. Democracy is the result of political maturity of all involved, and not only the ruling party. Essentially, it implies an acceptance of the rules of the game by all concerned. And these should be respected and adhered to. In developing countries, particularly in Africa, the conditions for liberal democracy are very fragile because of the colonial heritage. For one thing, colonial regimes were undemocratic and intolerant; for another, the former colonial powers continue to foment trouble, division and disunity exemplified more clearly in Southern Africa by RENAMO in Mozambique and UNITA in Angola. Conditions of insurgency and dissidence undermine the very basis for political relaxation and liberalism.

Colonialism did not always foster the development and growth of democracy in Africa. In the post-colonial situation, imperialism impedes the development of a democratic tradition through various devices, including remote control. Under these precarious conditions, struggling for democracy becomes extremely difficult. Part of the anti-imperialist

strategy includes primarily struggling for independent socio-economic development. As long as Africa remains *underdeveloped* and *dependent* on the West, democracy will remain largely elusive.

Politically, imperialism has made it a point and 'God-given' right to determine the fate of African countries by sponsoring armed opposition groups for the purposes of economic and political destabilisation. In Southern Africa the consequences of this are open testimony to the machinations of imperialism, and are not of academic interest only. But the imperialist stranglehold on the region impedes our capacity for independent political and socio-economic development and attainment of peace.

A point also needs to be made regarding the multi-party system, opposition parties and democracy in Africa. Opposition groups in Africa have not always displayed the adequate maturity necessary for engendering democracy. Generally speaking, they have often failed to play the traditional role of such groups. That is, the role of an opposition party should be either: to provide an alternative platform and programme based on clearly conceived and articulated viewpoints; or to act as pressure group, constituted primarily to influence developments, and to articulate and represent sectional interests.

And this is related to the question posed above, namely whether liberal democracy is a feasible proposition under conditions of imperialist domination? Because of the underdeveloped nature of African economies, and the control of these economies by private foreign capital, the social base of many political parties is often weak, if not dubious. The most important factor, however, is nationalism. New parties formed after independence have no clearly based socio-economic framework. In other cases they are compradorial in character and will therefore articulate the interests of international capital. The working class is, at any rate, politically and organisationally weak. As a result, only the nationalist forces have the capacity to perpetuate themselves. This theoretical proportion is useful for understanding the reality.

Unfortunately, Third World political trends are characterised by parties outside government viewing and projecting themselves negatively; their primary role becomes one of opposing rather than contributing positively, or providing alternatives. In a majority of cases the parties have no clear cut and coherent ideology and tend to seek support based on spurious, idealist and unattainable promises. Where there is ideology, this has usually been rightist and compradorial in character, aligned as they are to foreign capital. Few opposition groups are nationally inspired, but tend to be fronts

for external forces. Let me not be misunderstood: one is not saying here there are no genuine opposition parties and groups in Africa. The point is that many of them do not have an independent existence of their own. Wittingly or unwittingly, they are wooed and incorporated by external forces, whose agenda may be entirely different.

The main motivation of opposition parties becomes assumption of power for very narrow objectives. Since assumption of power becomes a primary pursuit, the temptation to resort to extra parliamentary and extra legal methods is great. This does not augur well for democracy.

This analysis is not far-fetched in relation to Zimbabwe. In addition to the Patriotic Front alliance during the liberation struggle, other numerous, internally-based political parties and organisations existed. Few of them could be said to have been clear and coherent in their objectives; more were compradorial or collaborationist in character. The 1978 Internal Settlement in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia clearly demonstrated the extent to which politically spineless parties and individuals could go on making compromises for narrow interests. Most internally based political parties did not have a nationalist perspective; they represented mainly the interests of the nascent African middle class. And this class tended to see its future, not with the Liberation Movements, but in collaborating with settler capitalism and international capital. Its compradorial character was thus amply demonstrated.

## ZUM'S PLATFORM IN THE 1990 ELECTIONS

After independence some have continued to exist; others have surfaced at election time. The Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) emerged in 1989 on the wave of anti-corruption and other issues. Despite its electoral showing, however, ZUM could not claim to have presented a coherent alternative programme to that of ZANU-PF during the 1990 general elections. What it presented were a set of grievances and areas of frustration. In the area where it tried to do so — economic development — this was both revealing and instructive. The solution for employment, shortages, transport, development, etc., appeared to be one thing: foreign investment.

Ideologically, the firm belief in foreign investment clearly underlined the comprador character of the dominant section of ZUM. The effect of unbridled foreign investment on whatever semblance of the national economy there might be, did not seem to constitute a fundamental point of consideration. The main problems of development were thus seen in terms of the regulated nature of the economy, and the attendant lack of foreign

investment, and not in terms of the foreign domination of the economy. While many outside ZUM might concede that there is need for some form of liberalisation of the economy, the major point of concern will be what impact such measures will have on the national economy.

Certainly liberalisation should not lead to de-industrialisation, but should facilitate the development and expansion of industry. At any rate, shortages, and the shopping trips "down South" and to Botswana are clearly confined to consumer luxury items: electronics, hi-fis, TVs, electrical gadgets, spares of vehicles and toys. What is needed, therefore, is acquisition of new technology and upgrading of existing technologies to manufacture qualitatively competitive TVs, hi-fis, sewing machines, toys, etc. In the short term, to extend liberalisation to importation of manufactured goods may alleviate shortages, but in the long term this will not lead to development, industrialisation and economic emancipation.

ZUM never fully addressed the land question, either. This would have been very interesting given the fact that it formed an alliance with the Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe (CAZ) which stands for landed interests and white privilege. CAZ has, since independence, retained the residual elements of the hard-core racists and, to an extent, the alliance between it and ZUM is fraught with contradictions. While ZUM has attached certain sections of the middle class, i.e. the small businessmen, those involved in import and export, fringes of the white collar workers at the middle level and lower rungs of the senior managerial groups, unhappy in the main with the slow pace of Africanisation in the private sector, CAZ largely stands for the old order, a return to colonialism. It is sustained by the deep nostalgia for Rhodesia.

Beyond opposing the one-party state and proclaiming itself committed to democracy, ZUM did not articulate or elaborate its view of democracy. This was no sufficient guarantee that the party had the capacity and propensity to uphold and promote democratic principles and practices. Indeed the unconverted rightly questioned the conspiratorial manner in which the ZUM candidates were presented to the electorate for the 1990 general elections. For a party which has sung so much about democracy, it would have been of interest to the public to have been informed of the method and criteria used for selecting its candidates. And, of course, to make us believe that the CAZ (former Rhodesia Front), as an organisation, has all of a sudden become married to democracy, was expecting too much.

But statements attributed to a senior ZUM functionary that: "There is more freedom in South Africa than in Zimbabwe" displayed emotion gone riotous!

Not only was it a clear negation of nationalism and independence in Zimbabwe, but this seemed to suggest that the African people had nothing to fight for in South Africa. The apartheid regime is engaged in a vicious violation of human rights and everywhere in South Africa the regime is harassing, killing and maiming people, and some think that is democracy and freedom! CAZ is, at any rate, least qualified to preach to anyone about democracy or the one-party state for its own record is clear. From UDI to 1980 and the RF maintained one of the most undemocratic, racist and oppressive systems in the history of this country.

And interesting, too, was ZUM's declared aversion to "foreign ideologies" and its commitment to a free enterprise system. But what kind of free enterprise system it would seek to promote and establish was never fully articulated. Nevertheless, given its belief in foreign investment as the panacea for Zimbabwe's problems, it is not difficult to establish the dominance of the compradorial elements in ZUM. Similarly, while the alliance with CAZ might be difficult to understand, this seems to be related to CAZ's fear of the resettlement programme, and the coincidence of views with ZUM over the free enterprise system.

Equally interesting was ZUM's persistence in casting aspersions on ZANU-PF and the state about the conduct and fairness of the elections, right from day one. Unfortunately, the tendency to mistrust everyone except oneself, as displayed by ZUM, seriously jeopardises the growth and development of a democratic atmosphere. Naturally, if allegations of malpractice can be substantiated and corroborated, these should be exposed in the public interest, but to make allegations based on pub talk and rumours, unnecessarily vitiates the atmosphere.

Other organisations may need to learn that political parties cannot be constituted solely to rally people around grievances. The perpetuity of a party must, in the end, depend on its coherent political platform and its vision of the present and the future. If, by some strange twist of fate, a party is swept to power primarily and exclusively over its articulation of grievances, two things may happen.

Firstly, on assuming power it may find that it neither has the capacity nor the vision to change anything in any meaningful way and, as a result it will lapse into dictatorial tendencies. Secondly, it may simply collapse under the sheer weight of its new responsibilities.



## CONCLUSION

As a way of concluding, I would like to submit that, first, we need to be conceptually clear about what we mean by democracy. To define our discussion to rights of association, speech and belief, does not make our discussion useful. Similarly, to equate democracy to the multi-party system, or to argue that the multi-party system guarantees democracy is false. Many are the examples where the multi-party system has guaranteed freedom and democracy for the bourgeoisie and sections of the petit bourgeoisie, and not the peasants and the workers. At any rate, imperialism negates the foundation for democracy and therefore, a struggle for democracy should be anti-imperialist. The way forward for Zimbabwe is via the socialist path of development. A discussion of democracy thus entails discussing property relations, the need for the social ownership of property, developing and consolidating a national economy and a struggle against imperialism. Second, there is great need for all involved in the debate on democracy to recognise the realities in which this can be promoted, developed and nurtured. In this context, the colonial experience, the anti-colonial struggle and the post-colonial situation and the forces that have been at sway at each stage are important.

It is, of course, a different thing to argue that we want to advance the struggle further now that our independence has been consolidated. That constitutes the tasks of the future.

The fact that ZANU-PF won the 1990 election with a convincing margin clearly points to the fact that it still enjoys the confidence of the majority of peasants and workers. Logically, its policies must much more deliberately be geared towards satisfying the aspirations of these classes.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Jonathan Moyo, "Hostage to Influence: Why Voting on One-Party State Violates Human Rights", *Parade*, July 1990. In this article, the compradorial, indeed rightist, argument is more explicit. For example, in arguing against the referendum to determine where the people want a one-party state, Moyo argues in language very close to that of Ian Smith and the RF:

"To support something requires a judgement based on the exercise of rational choice. Of course, rural folks would vote for a one-party state if ZANU-PF asked them to. But, of course, this would be because rural folks are the most politically backward members of our society."

And "it appears that the ruling party is only too eager and happy to use *peasant backwardness* as a lever for winning general elections and a referendum on a one-party state. A *politically developed* population will never vote for a one-party state. A referendum on a one-party state can be won only by the grace of masses' ignorance". And finally, "The poverty of this majoritarian formula is that it negates the *absolute need to safeguard minority interests from the tyranny of the majority*. There can be *no acceptable number of people who can vote against other people's rights, regardless of how few the latter are*". (Emphasis added).

There are two conclusions to draw from these revealing statements: a) Moyo's use of the term democracy is spurious, for he is advocating elitism and meritocracy, and b) despite his pretension to the contrary, his views are akin to those of fascism, as exemplified by his disdain for the majority, and the emphasis on "the need to safeguard minority interests".

The characterisation of the peasants as the "most politically backward", and its juxtaposition with the "politically developed" urban population is, of course, politically and empirically illiterate. Not only is it elitist, but it seeks to completely downplay the peasants encounter with colonialism and their role in resisting it, and ultimately overthrowing it. But it is clear that they are backward only because they support ZANU-PF; they would have been developed if they opposed it. Peasants may be characterised in many ways, and accused of many things, but certainly not of being unaware of their interests. Exemplified here are the problems of subjective, petit-bourgeois interpretation of reality.

2. Kempton Makamure, "One-Party State: A Way for Leaders to Secure Permanent Tenure of Office", *The Financial Gazette*, April 6, 1990

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### A ONE-PARTY OR A MULTI-PARTY STATE?\*

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Fay Chung

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For some months the air has been thick with talk of the advantages or disadvantages of a one-party or a multi-party state. Unfortunately the focus on the one-party state leads to a blurring of the more important question, and that is the ideological direction of Zimbabwe — which way are we going? Is it to the left or socialism; to the right or capitalism; or backwards to feudalism? Surely the important question is are we going to have socialism through either a one-party state or through a multi-party state; or do we want to return to the "romantic" golden age of feudalism? There is no doubt that all three directions are visible in Zimbabwean politics today, and that there are ardent proponents and practitioners of each.

Historically Zimbabwe was a well established feudal empire in the pre-colonial era, much like the Asian feudal states in India, China and Japan of the same period. It was colonised by a brutal settler colonialism, which summarily, by force of arms, captured land, mines and people, and imposed an extremely exploitative form of capitalism on the country. Rhodesian capitalism was very advantageous to the white settlers, but caused a great deal of suffering to the black population who were deprived of their land and cattle; of self-government and independence; of their culture, language and history. Blacks became a nation of servants whose only rationale for existence was to serve the white man. Not surprisingly, there were few blacks who could find much good to say about capitalism: all longed for an escape from slavery. Some yearned for a return to the golden past of Monomatapa; others fell in love with the ideal of socialism where all men and women were equal regardless of race. Not surprisingly, all legitimate liberation movements espoused socialism as the system of government which would end racial discrimination. However, few had really considered in depth what socialism would really mean other than the end of the oppression and racial discrimination associated with the Rhodesian regime. Yet oppression and racial discrimination can be removed by capitalism, socialism or feudalism, of course, in different ways with different results. Outright capitalists like Edgar Tekere and Patrick Kombayi were as prominent in the liberation struggle as the socialists. The removal of the Smith regime did not spell the end of capitalism as some freedom fighters had hoped. Instead it brought about further entrenchment of a capitalism

dominated by multi-nationals and white/Asian/non-indigenous national capitalists. Would-be black capitalists either had to fight it out ruthlessly using political clout to wrest a little property from white capitalists, or become the representatives and agents of multi-nationals, a comprador capitalism which must be the most undesirable form of capitalism possible for Zimbabwe. The masses did not gain control of the means of production or the ruling heights of the economy; but they did get access to education, health services, water development and agricultural marketing. Of course, "free" education, "free" health services, and so forth, cannot be a substitute for ownership and control of the means of production. "Free" social services do not equal socialism. Such services are even more free in capitalist Britain than they are in Zimbabwe today.

Multi-party politics has also been equated with democracy in the confused slogans which replace real thought and analysis among politicians. They so easily forget that the Rhodesian regime was a multi-party state with a multitude of parties such as the Dominion Party, the United Federal Party, the Centre Party and, of course, the Rhodesian Front: all these parties represented different sections of the white community who constituted 4% of the population. The other 96% of the population were not allowed any form of democracy, the more outspoken of them ending up either murdered like Herbert Chitepo, Edson Sithole, J. Z. Moyo, Nikita Mangena and tens of thousands of other freedom fighters or imprisoned for a decade or more. That was multi-party democracy for you. The same is true of South Africa today: whites are allowed any amount of democracy and any number of parties in a multi-party state, but 52 000 blacks, including thousands of children, were imprisoned or detained in South Africa for political dissent over the past five years. Although Nelson Mandela has been released, there are still 3 000 political prisoners in the apartheid jails.

All this goes to show that a multi-party state is definitely not a panacea for all our problems. On the other hand, is a one-party state the answer?

Traditional feudalism was based on the one-party state. Henry VIII was the epitome of the one-party state leader. The Chinese and Japanese empires were one-party states. The empires of Monomatapa or of Tshaka were similarly one-party states. Ironically the most successful example of the one-party state is the Roman Catholic Church, with one Pope elected for life and the opposition and critics branded and expelled as heretics. Women do not have equal democratic rights in the Roman Catholic Church or in any other feudal state. Nevertheless, one-party states can be very successful as shown by the Vatican. The question is: really successful in what ways?

The feudal one-party states did bring peace and unity for the decades of a good ruler's reign. At times it was even possible to have 50 years of peace. In countries where succession was clear through primogeniture it was possible to have peace even for a century or two.

However, the weakness of such feudal states was that either there was a weak or bad leader or there was no clear successor. Such situations led to civil war, murder or military takeovers. Thus feudal one-party states brought about periods of peace punctuated by periods of chaos and lawlessness.

However, it is pertinent to ask whether the harmonies in feudal one-party states are possible within a capitalist economy such as Zimbabwe's. Feudalism can be combined with capitalism: we have lots of good as well as bad models for this. Japan, which has an outright capitalist economic system combined with the most humane of feudal cultures, is a good example. Whilst Japan is not a one-party state, it is a dominant-party state, with the dominant party being in power continuously since Japan became a modern state. The corrupt banana republics of South America are bad examples. We also have many African examples of one-party states such as Zaire, Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique, with Zaire and Kenya espousing capitalism, Zambia touting its own ideology of humanism, and Tanzania and Mozambique claiming to be socialist. African one-party states have, on the whole, suffered from severe economic stagnation, because African economies are still very much tied to those of their former metropolitan colonial masters, who can still make or break an African economy at will. A one-party state in Zimbabwe will mean goodbye to Western assistance, a prospect which thrills some but alarms many. Thrilling because it offers the challenge of working out an entirely indigenous solution as no aid can be expected from the Eastern bloc either. This is the Chinese and Albanian model. Alarming because an entirely indigenous solution must mean a lot of belt-tightening and austerity, and since independence these two have become rather anathema to the ruling class in Zimbabwe, though very familiar to the unemployed. Certainly the present liberalisation programme of which much is expected in terms of industrialisation, economic expansion and job-creation will be stillborn. A one-party feudal state will bring harmony for a decade or two, but is unlikely to bring about economic modernisation or industrialisation for which some foreign technology and investment are needed.

The present policy of modern Western-style education for all, probably the most successful of Government's achievements, does not augur well for a return to feudal harmony. Feudal harmony depends on retaining the

peasantry as the dominant force in society, but education, particularly secondary education, removes the youth from their peasant roots and prepares them for industrialisation. Today the peasantry constitutes 75% of the population, and they will certainly favour a one-party state as this is the best form of government that they are familiar with over the past several centuries. But their offspring are no longer peasants, and have little aspiration to return to small peasant subsistence holdings. They want the advantages of the modern state, attainable only through very rapid industrialisation.

Is a multi-party state synonymous with capitalism? There have, of course, been one-party capitalist states, such as Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Tekere, always an extreme rightwinger within ZANU-PF, did not hesitate to crush any leftwing opposition or criticism and was instrumental to crushing the *vashandi* movement within ZANU-PF in the mid-1970s. The *vashandi*, an extreme leftist group of university students and young commanders who controlled the liberation struggle during the *detente* period of 1975-1976, were not given the right to democracy by Tekere but were summarily imprisoned from 1976 to 1980. If Tekere's ZUM were in power today, leftwingers would have to fear for their lives as they did in Nazi Germany.

Is it possible to have a multi-party socialist state? The model of socialism developed first by Lenin and Stalin was very much a one-party totalitarian socialist state, with cruel persecution of "capitalists roaders"? However, if we are to go back to the father of socialism, Karl Marx, he envisaged socialists as taking part in all forms of mass movements, implying the existence of a multiplicity of political groupings. Today, as we see the collapse of the one-party socialist model in Eastern Europe, we see what were once monolithic communist parties breaking down into trade unions, peasant groups, intellectual groups and so forth. It is possible that the embrace of capitalism by the Eastern bloc is mere wishful thinking on the part of the West, and that what is happening instead is the formation of many different socialist parties. Stalinism, so beloved by socialists for many decades, may be replaced by a more sophisticated array of alternative socialisms. Just as capitalism and Christianity have shown such varied expressions, so it is all too likely that socialism too will develop more varieties in its maturity.

What about Zimbabwe and the one-party state? Today we see the phenomenon of so-called Zimbabwean Marxist-Leninists of a Stalinist hue allying themselves with outright fascists in the name of democracy, against ZANU-PF's bid for a monolithic one-party state. The alliance of the extreme

left with the extreme right is an opportunistic one: both are against ZANU-PF, probably the only thing they have in common. ZANU-PF has become the dominant party, joining together all ethnic groups and a range of ideological orientations from leftwing nationalism to rightwing nationalism. The common denominator is nationalism. ZANU-PF began its life as a nationalist movement, and has retained this patriotic orientation. Because of its mass support from the peasantry and its ability to contain and absorb different ideological leanings; its renowned "pragmatism", ZANU-PF is set to remain the dominant party for the next few decades. Minority parties are likely to continue to gain one or two seats, perhaps more as class differentiation becomes more marked in a pluralist society, but they are unlikely to achieve a plausible mass base for the foreseeable future. Moreover, the fear of Zimbabweans voting for a "tribe", a very popular Western form of political prejudice which predicted victory for ZUM in Manicaland was proved wrong. The Zimbabwean electorate had moved beyond tribal politics during the liberation war. ZUM actually had less support in Manicaland than in large cities such as Harare. In these circumstances a one-party state is an unnecessary distraction from the more critical issues of the re-distribution of land and wealth; the economic take-off which can raise Zimbabwe's per capita income from its present low of Z\$1 000 per annum; and development in all its forms.

#### NOTE

\*The views expressed in this chapter are the author's own personal views.

## CHAPTER NINE

# THE ONE-PARTY-STATE, SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLES IN ZIMBABWE: A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

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Arthur Mutambara

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The expressed intention by ZANU-PF to go ahead with its December 1989 Party Congress resolution to create a one-party state in Zimbabwe by legislation has been the subject of extensive debate and deliberations. Consequently a number of different organisations have taken definite positions on this matter. It is in this context that the University of Zimbabwe Students' Union, obligated by historical responsibility, states its case on this pertinent issue without equivocation or ambiguity.

At its general meeting on 3rd May 1990, the motion was comprehensively debated and voted on. The general meeting voted against the establishment of a one-party state in Zimbabwe. It was rejected as a phenomenon that leads to a fascist dictatorship, fossilised and bureaucratised political system, characterised by a cult of personality, monopolistic politics of domination, inefficiency, corruption and petit bourgeois primitive accumulation. The Union denounced all naive feudalistic arguments advanced for the one-party state by senior ZANU-PF figures as short-sighted, simplistic and incorrect analyses of the Zimbabwean objective reality.

The basis of the Union's rejection of the one-party state concept draws from two levels of analysis. The first is an ideological perception that has been expressly confirmed by the recent events in Eastern Europe. The second level relates to an analysis of Zimbabwean historical conditions and the balance of forces between conservative and progressive nationalists in the mass party, ZANU-PF.

The new political thinking in Eastern Europe, characterised by restructuring, renewal and openness signifies a phenomenon which is revolutionary in its essence and historical in its significance. This phenomenon with its drive for democratic pluralism is a manifestation that there is nothing inherently socialist about a one-party state. In fact, it is a reflection that the one-party state is not necessarily compatible with socialism. The fight for political democracy and mass participation in these countries is a demonstrable attempt to restore the democratic and



humanistic values of socialism lost through the vulgarisation and distortions of the ideology since the Stalinist era. It aims at ridding socialism of unscientific subjectivism, not socialism as an ideology. The Union remains firmly committed to Marxism-Leninism, but in an environment of multi-party democracy.

It is our submission that the first task of the working class is to win the battle for democracy and that the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without a struggle for democracy. Thus, from these lessons from Eastern Europe, we denounce and reject the one-party state concept.

The second basis of rejection is largely dictated by the events in Zimbabwe over the past ten years and the experiences of other neo-colonial one-party states in Malawi, Zaire, Zambia, Kenya and elsewhere in the Third World. The ten years of independence in Zimbabwe, in particular the last five years, were marked by a profound denigration of the basic tenets of fundamental inalienable democratic rights of assembly, association and expression; a negation of working class demands consisting of the right to work, the right to a living wage, the right to better working conditions and the right to education and social security. There has been excessive use of repressive *Emergency Powers* against striking workers, doctors, Post and Telecommunications Corporation technicians, National Railways of Zimbabwe workers, and recently, the nurses. (The 25-year old State of Emergency was finally lifted in July 1990 — Eds.) The ZANU-PF Government has failed to manifest tolerance towards criticism, dissent and rational disputation. This led to arrests, detentions, physical and psychological harassment of trade unionists, opposition politicians, lecturers and students under the same *Emergency Powers*. This culminated in the irrational and unprecedented closure of the University of Zimbabwe in October 1989. Zimbabwe has witnessed the undermining of free professional journalism and the stifling of democratic debate and dialogue. The separation of powers between the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary has been violated and threatened as evidenced in the cases of the 1989 Kariba by-election and that of Ian Smith's salary saga. The recent (1990) general elections, characterised by intimidation and violence, were an illustration of the inability of ZANU-PF to accommodate opposition parties. The General Elections cannot be considered to have been free and fair elections. There also has been a growing alliance between the nationalists and international capital and hence their attainment of compradorial positions and their clear inability to resolve demands for land redistribution, control and management of the economy and general

advancement and betterment of the material conditions of the working class and the peasantry. On the basis of the above submissions, it is a clear Students' Union position that a ZANU-PF one-party state would be an intolerant and corrupt petit bourgeois one-party state against the working class, the peasantry and the generality of the intelligentsia including students. Thus, on the basis of the recent historical experiences of Zimbabwe, the Union unreservedly rejects the one-party state in Zimbabwe.

As a result, the Union therefore resolves to articulate a minimum programme to sustain and maintain national democratic rights by vigorously and committedly opposing a *de jure* one-party state. We call for the establishment of a broad-based mass democratic movement consisting of progressive organisations of workers, consumers, peasants, lecturers, teachers, students, unemployed people, churches, political parties and the entirety of the democratic professional fraternity, to openly and fearlessly campaign against the legislation of the one-party state. It is imperative, however, that it be understood in no uncertain terms that this is a bare minimum programme for the Union, but also a pre-condition for the Union maximum programme — to fight for the establishment of a truly egalitarian socialist Zimbabwe.

The Union is wary and conscious of the pitfalls of the debate on democracy. As long as the debate on democracy remains imprisoned in the four walls of liberalism and social democratic tendencies, then our submission is that the debate has not yet begun. It is the Student Union's position that in the present historical context, democracy expresses an ideology of resistance and struggle of the large masses and popular classes of the people. Finally, in this concrete historical context of struggle we envisage a maximum programme characterised by democratic struggles of the working class, the peasantry and the progressive intelligentsia against the continuation of monopoly racial capitalism, as contradictions continue to radically sharpen. This struggle continues unabated.

## CHAPTER TEN

# THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND THE ONE-PARTY-STATE DEBATE

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**Albert Musarurwa**

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### INTRODUCTION

Since independence in 1980, no topic has dominated the Zimbabwean political and intellectual circles more than the debate on the one-party state. This debate has been further provoked by one of the ruling ZANU-PF's resolutions at the 1989 congress that the party shall seek to establish a one-party state in Zimbabwe. This position has been reinforced in statements by leading ZANU-PF political figures, supported by a host of pro-ZANU-PF intellectuals and newspaper columnists.

Yet controversy still surrounds the current position of ZANU-PF (particularly that of its Central Committee and the Politburo) on the one-party state issue. Contradictory positions have been published in the press, some reports indicating that the majority in these two party organs are opposed to a one-party system in Zimbabwe; and other reports, obviously from chief spokespersons, indicating otherwise. That a good number of key ZANU-PF figures are opposed to a one-party state in Zimbabwe cannot be doubted. What remains to be seen is whether the party will officially renounce and abandon one of its major Congress resolutions or nevertheless go ahead to establish the one-party system regardless of any opposition to it within the key party organs and elsewhere.

What also makes the current debate both within and outside ZANU-PF all the more vital is the fact that there was virtually no meaningful debate on this and other vital issues at the party congress. Crucial issues such as the one-party state, socialism and the constitutional amendments were never discussed at length at the congress. Consequently, one can deduce that the adoption of resolutions at the party congress in December 1989 was not a true reflection of the diverse views held by the Congress delegates.

The current debate has also been fuelled by recent events in Eastern Europe. Fierce arguments have emerged as to whether the upheavals in the socialist countries were insurrections against one-party rule, or against socialism, or against both or neither. This debate has raged across Africa as it has across the rest of the world, and has assumed new ferocity in Africa

in the wake of similar upheavals across the continent. Although none have resulted in the immediate overthrow of the regimes in power, a number of die-hard political despots in power have had to introduce reforms, some with far-reaching significance. Changes are now being witnessed in Zaire, Benin and Zambia. Mozambique's President Joaquim Chissano has also set his country on a reform course which includes acceptance of a multi-party system.

But President Robert Mugabe has remained adamant that the current events in Africa are basically the result of arm-twisting by Western donor countries. It would appear that the President views these current events in some African countries in terms of 'enemy conspiracies' rather than as genuine demands for political reform by the African people themselves. Only time will tell whether or not his analysis is correct. This chapter is basically meant to provoke new thoughts and arguments on the one-party state issue and to widen the scope of the debate thereon.

## DEFINITION OF VARIETIES

Quite often, debate on the one-party state issue has been conducted on the assumption that there is a general consensus on what a one-party state system actually is. If there has been such consensus, it has been on the conception of a one-party system being a system allowing one legal political party (the ruling party) within the political system.

However, the ZCTU defines a one-party system not so much in terms of the singularity of legalised political parties, but rather in terms of the dominance of a single legal political force, class or tendency. To explain this further, the ZCTU classifies political systems into four distinct categories. These are:

### **The Single Legal Party System**

This is by far the most obvious and the most easily understood variation of the one-party concept. It is simply a system in which there is only one legal political party, which is the ruling party, recognised by the country's legal system. It is illegal to form another political party. If there is one party there is no need for multi-party elections. There are only elections contesting ruling party candidates against each other. Examples of this are quite plentiful. In Africa, these include Zambia where the United National Independence Party (UNIP) is the only legal party, FRELIMO in

Mozambique, Chama Cha Mapinduzi in Tanzania and the Workers Party in Ethiopia.

Most people view this category as the only conception of a one-party state, and it is this version that easily comes to mind when a debate on the one-party system is provoked. However, there are several others.

### **Military Regimes**

Another variation of the one-party system is the military regime, often dubbed the military dictatorship. This is a political system which often results from a *coup d'état* or some similar military takeover, such as that following a civil war. This system has often been described as a "no-party system" since there is no ruling or opposition party as such and the people in power are either the coup leaders or leaders of the previous rebel army that would have ousted the previous regime. The formation of any political party is outlawed. There are no elections and the ruling clique holds power for as long as they care. They may hand over to a civilian government, or may be ousted by another coup. Examples include Nigeria and Ghana, known for their endless coups and military regimes, Uganda where a rebel army took over power following a civil war, and Liberia where the late Master Sergeant Samuel Doe seized power in a bloody military coup in 1980.

### **One Ideology System**

Another version of the "one-party" state is the one-ideology system. Basically, this is a political system in which only one particular ideology or a political leaning is tolerated. Quite often, there is more than one political party, but only those parties that subscribe to the official ideology or political leaning or do not otherwise undermine or contradict it are allowed to exist.

Although outwardly there is more than one political party, these only exist on condition that they "toe the official political and ideological line". The official political and ideological stance of the ruling party is well-secured and in no way threatened or undermined. There are elections in this political system, but these elections range from qualified franchise to general elections, contestable only by the legalised political parties. Other forms of electoral systems also do exist. The easiest and nearest example of this variation is the South African political system where only those political parties which subscribe to the racist apartheid ideology and white supremacism, and are of a certain racial composition, can legally exist and participate in the political life of the country. Although other anti-apartheid

political parties and movements such as the ANC, the PAC and the SACP were recently unbanned, their continued opposition to apartheid and their struggle for its overthrow has meant that the racist system keeps these parties out of the political system.

Other examples of this political system existed in Eastern Europe prior to the recent upheavals. In East Germany (GDR), for instance, the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SUD) was an alliance of political parties that subscribed to the socialist philosophy and ideology, and no political party opposed to socialism could join the alliance or legally exist in the GDR.

### **Multi-Party System**

The last version of a one-party system is a political system in which any political party is allowed to exist, whatever its political or ideological leaning, and the law provides for that existence. However, although legally in existence, the opposition political parties or some of them are so harassed and tormented by the ruling party or its government that in the final analysis they are rendered non-existent. It simply becomes virtually impossible for the opposition parties to exercise the constitutional rights provided for in the political system that the ruling party enjoys unchecked political domination through the gross abuse of the state machinery.

Although general elections do take place in such political systems, wanton arrest, banning of public meetings or gatherings, an extremely hostile and negative press coverage are some of the weapons the ruling party unleashes onto the opposition parties in order to politically castrate them. An example of this version is the United States of America where leftist or left-wing political parties and persons are constantly harassed and accused of all sorts of political illegalities. Communist figures, for instance, were harassed and expelled from public institutions such as universities and deemed undesirable elements or "communist agents" at the height of the Cold War era in the 1950s.

### **THE MULTI-PARTY POLITICAL SYSTEM**

After classifying some multi-party systems as variations of the one-party system, defining a multi-party system becomes a somewhat tricky task. A safe starting point would be to say that any system that guarantees more rights and freedoms of political choice, assembly, expression and activity than any of the four categories defined above should qualify for the definition of a multi-party system.

However, in more concrete terms, a multi-party system is a political system in which the following universally accepted basic political rights and freedoms are guaranteed:

*The right to form or join a political party of one's choice*

Citizens must have the guaranteed right to form any political party of their choice. They must not be afraid of forming a political party for fear that it might appear too rightist or leftist or tribalist or in any way sectional in the eyes of the ruling party or Government.

This right must be constitutionally guaranteed. There should be no requirement to register political parties since this will give the ruling party the advantage to scrutinise and in some way control opposition parties. Whilst people must be more interested in joining the existing political parties and engaging in political activities under the parties, the option to form other political parties must remain open at all times.

*The right to fair and equal access to the media*

Every political party within a multi-party environment must enjoy the right to equal access to and unbiased publicity in the national media. In addition, each party must have the right to set up and run its media. Indeed, in some democracies this has even included the right to run party-owned radio stations.

The national media must play a fair and unbiased role, such as providing equal publicity to all political parties. The national press must not reduce itself to the role of a party mouthpiece or engage in political commentary against or in favour of any of the political parties. It must simply put to the public what the various political parties are saying or have on their political agenda and leave it to the electorate to make its choice.

*Freedom to assemble, associate and engage in political activities*

The people must have the guaranteed freedom to assemble and associate as they wish, and to freely engage in political activities in a peaceful and orderly manner, whatever the political party they belong to. This means that they should not have to seek permission or authority to hold a public meeting, provided that the meeting is conducted in an orderly manner and does not disturb public peace.

*Freedom from abuse of state power*

One of the fundamental freedoms which opposition political parties must enjoy is the freedom from arbitrary abuse of state power by the ruling party or its Government. Quite often there is general abuse of state power in some

political systems. Such abuses range from mild violations of civil and political rights such as denying the right to political expression and association, arbitrary arrests and detentions without trial and sometimes abductions leading to 'disappearance', torture and killing in detention.

The extent of these abuses varies from one state to the other, depending on the viciousness of each state. But generally speaking, there are a couple of common practices such as severe control of public meetings and arrests without charge.

#### *Freedom to have fraternal bilateral relations*

In many political systems opposition parties find it difficult to establish relations with outside Governments, political parties and organisations. Attempts to have such relations have often been met with accusations of subversion in the foreign relations. This has, as a result, starved the opposition parties of much-needed financial, material and diplomatic assistance which the ruling party receives in abundance.

Even where such relations are apparently tolerated, there are always other forms of controlling outside assistance such as through custom duties on foreign-donated goods and cash, or even outright seizure of such donations.

### THE ZIMBABWE EXPERIENCE

A question that immediately flows from the foregoing analysis is which of the five categories of political systems (both one-party and multi-party) does Zimbabwe fall into? This question can only be accurately answered by a an in-depth and careful analysis of the many features that characterise Zimbabwe's socio-political and electoral system, particularly at the present moment.

#### *Multi-party constitution*

The Zimbabwean national constitution provides for a multi-party political system. People are, constitutionally and legally, entitled to form a political party of their choice and to participate in all national political activities. As it exists in the constitution, the right to form political parties is unfettered and unqualified.

#### *Access to the media*

The access of the various political parties to the media in Zimbabwe is definitely far from fair. There is no doubt that the ruling party enjoys a lion's share of publicity in the state-controlled media. Not only do the minority parties receive scant coverage, but the little coverage they do get is



extremely negative whilst the vast coverage enjoyed by the ruling party is quite positive. In fact, the national media, particularly certain newspapers, are now carrying out the ruling party's public relations — this in addition to the party-owned media.

#### *Right to freely assemble, associate and engage in political activities*

Whilst this right theoretically exists, in practice its exercise by minority parties is overwhelmed by problems. There are severe legal restrictions on the holding of public meetings and strict procedures must be followed. Freedom of assembly continues to be severely curtailed in terms of the *Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, Chapter 65*, even after the termination of the *State of Emergency*. All public meetings have to be cleared and permitted by the state. In practice, all ruling party applications to hold such meetings have been granted, whilst some of those for the minority parties have been refused. In addition, some of the local authorities dominated by the ruling party have denied minority parties access to and the right to use local authority property or premises for political activities.

#### *Freedom from abuse of state power*

Organs of state power, particularly the police and related organs, have often conducted themselves in a manner hardly depicting a politically neutral and professional police force. Some police officers were actually returning officers at ZANU (PF) primary elections. Government vehicles such as police trucks have reportedly been used to ferry ruling party supporters to rallies and polling stations.

#### *Appointed members of parliament*

Following recent constitutional amendments, the new single-chamber parliament has 150 members, of whom 120 are elected directly by the constituents, and 30 are elected indirectly or appointed. Of the thirty non-constituent members, twelve are appointed by the President as he deems fit. As a result, this has increased the majority of the ruling party. Father Brian McGarry has posed the following questions on this issue:

Why is it considered necessary to have appointed MPs? Is it democratic to let the majority of the population choose only 80% of the members of parliament, so that in effect we have a 'one-man, 0.8 of a vote' system?<sup>1</sup>

#### *Advantageous electoral system*

In 1980, Zimbabwe had a proportional representation system whereby the number of seats won by a party in a province were roughly proportional to that party's popularity there. However, in 1985 and 1990, elections on the common roll were held on a constituency or 'first-past-the-post' system, so

that a party could not secure a seat in the whole country even if it only narrowly lost in each constituency. This new system recently worked quite well for the ruling party, since it secured more seats under the constituency system than it would have under the party list system.<sup>2</sup> Under the constituency system, ZANU-PF obtained 117 seats, ZUM 2 seats and ZANU (Ndonga) 1 seat in the 1990 elections. The possible distribution of seats under the party list system would have been ZANU-PF 99 seats, ZUM 20 seats and ZANU (Ndonga) 1.

### *Extensive use of subsidiary legislation*

Subsidiary legislation constitutes a very significant portion of our laws in Zimbabwe. This includes subsidiary legislation, by ministers. This concept enables the Government or the ruling party to by-pass the parliamentary legislative process and make laws virtually straight from the party politburo or central committee, thus denying opposition legislators the opportunity to debate and possibly oppose the proposed legal changes.

### *Party and state organs*

Instead of having a clear distinction between party and state organs and functionaries, quite often there is a fusion of the two. In particular, the Ministry of Political Affairs is actually the secretariat of the ruling party, using state funds to run party activities such as youth training. Not only is it a violation of multi-party constitutional principles, but also it gives a very unfair advantage to the smaller parties whose members and supporters, as taxpayers, actually finance the ruling party.

### *Presidential pardon*

The recently announced Presidential amnesty, under which some ruling party youths convicted of violence against suspected political opponents were released and pardoned, demonstrates how the Presidential prerogative can be used in favour of the ruling party.

### *International relations*

The present situation still allows a good measure of international relations for the smaller parties, although it would be risking political relations with the ruling party's government for a foreign government or party to establish open relations with opposition parties.

From the fore-going, one can forcefully argue that Zimbabwe has a variation of the one-party system rather than a multi-party system, since the fundamental rights and practices in a multi-party system are lacking here.

## LESSONS FROM EASTERN EUROPE AND AFRICA

It is important for Zimbabweans, especially those who advocate a one-party system, to take note of the recent events in Eastern Europe. These ideologues often argue that a one-party system is consistent with Marxist-Leninist theory and with our national socialist ambitions. Nothing could be further from the truth. Joe Slovo aptly put it thus:

In relation to the socialist perspective, it is sometimes forgotten that the concept of the single-party state is nowhere to be found in classical Marxist theory. And we have had sufficient experience of one-party rule in various parts of the world to perhaps conclude that the 'mission' to promote real democracy under a one-party system is not just difficult but, in the long run, impossible.

But, in any case, where a single party state is in place and there is not even democracy and accountability within the party, it becomes a short-cut to a tyranny over the whole of society. And at different points in time this is what happened in most socialist states.<sup>3</sup>

It must be emphasised that the Marxist-Leninist postulate of socialist revolution was based on the concept of a vanguard, working-class party as the leading rather than as the only political party.

Joe Slovo further deals with the deterioration of the situation in Eastern Europe by stating that:

With no real right to dissent by citizens or even by the mass of the party membership, truth became more and more inhibited by deadening dogma; a sort of catechism took place of creative thought. And, within the confines of a single-party state, the alternative to active conformism was either silence or the risk of punishment as 'an enemy' of the people.<sup>4</sup>

What comes out clearly is that the people's right to political democracy surpasses all the other rights, since without this right it is not possible for them to enjoy the other rights.

Another lesson to come out of the events in Eastern Europe is that, consistent with the Marxist-Leninist theory of social development, every society proceeding to a communist society is a class society, and this includes the socialist society; and since every party is in a true sense an advanced detachment of a social class, to institute a one-party system in a class society amounts to suppression of other classes and to denying them their democratic rights. This mystifies these classes and their ideologies into 'the unknown alternative' and, consequently, elevates them into the focal point for hope for a frustrated people. Moreover, the massive legislative and other state 'safeguards' that go with the one-party state system create a false sense of security. The acceptability of the government is never put to real test and the incumbents find it unnecessary to respond to their people's needs.

## UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS

As already stated at the beginning, it still remains unclear whether ZANU-PF will go ahead with the one-party state concept. Nevertheless, there is a congress resolution to that effect and people are entitled to assume that the matter is still firmly on the agenda.

But the following questions must provide food for thought for the one-party state protagonists, particularly in the ruling party:

General elections since 1980 have indicated that ZANU-PF is confident of retaining power through a democratic, multi-party electoral process. Why then does it find it necessary to have a one-party state? Perhaps the answer to this came from ZANU-PF Political Commissar, Moven Mahachi, who stated, in an interview with *Parade* magazine that:

If we, ZANU-PF, think the people are in total support of us there may not be any need to legislate for it. There may not be any need for a referendum.<sup>6</sup>

It could be concluded from this statement that ZANU-PF is seeking a one-party state in order to cushion itself, albeit temporarily, against a possible future loss of popularity, especially given the deepening socio-economic and political crisis already manifested in low voter turnout in the 1990 elections.

If ZANU-PF goes on to establish a one-party state in Zimbabwe, what indicators will it need in future to convince it that a change back to a multi-party system is now necessary? Would that be mere oral demands, or riots (as in Zambia and Kenya), or an outright civil war (as in Liberia and Romania)?

Given the continued talk about a referendum, can one argue that a referendum can only decide or indicate the popularity of the one-party state concept, and not the question of whether or not a one-party system is democratic? In other words, should a referendum in Zimbabwe come out in favour of the concept, is it not possible that a system which is possibly undemocratic will be established simply because the referendum decided in its favour?

## THE ZCTU'S POSITION ON POLITICAL ALIGNMENT

The position of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) on the one-party state concept has provoked some varied and interesting reactions. The ZCTU General Council decided, in April 1990, that it fully supports and adheres to the concept of political pluralism, or to the multi-party system. Consistent with this line, the ZCTU had, since August

1988, renounced its previously voiced call for representation in the ruling ZANU (PF) party structures. Ideologically, the ZCTU adheres to the socialist ideology and Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Due to its position against the one-party system, apart from the absence of a socialist party in Zimbabwe, the ZCTU is not prepared to be incorporated into the structures of any political party, though it will support those policies of a political party or government in Zimbabwe which promote democracy and protect and advance the interests of the working people. Sadly, however, this stance by ZCTU and its endeavour to contribute to a sound and sober debate on this very crucial issue has now provoked shrieks of hysteria from some ambitious political opportunists. The ZCTU, however, hopes that a healthy debate will persist. The ZCTU remains ideologically socialist and politically neutral *vis-à-vis* existing political parties.

## CONCLUSION: WHITHER ZIMBABWE?

Given the possible back-peddalling by ZANU-PF on the issue of the one-party state, it is difficult to cast our eyes into the future. But one thing is certain: the debate both within ZANU-PF and outside on the one-party system is far from over. The issue still remains on the party's agenda, and nobody knows what a future or a present ZANU-PF or any other ruling party for that matter might have in store for us.

But, given the argument that the current political system in Zimbabwe is a mere variation of the one-party state system, it is actually in the interest of the ZANU(PF) that the current disguised system, rather than the more open variations, be retained. There are very few advantages enjoyed by a ruling party in a constitutionally entrenched one-party system which ZANU-PF is currently not enjoying. It still enjoys monopoly of the mass media, use of state funds for party purposes, access to state machinery, a favourable electoral system, and additional President-appointed members of parliament, among many other benefits, and judging from events elsewhere, a change to a more crude variety will actually make the party unpopular at a very fast rate.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Brian McGarry: Parliament as affected by the ending of the Lancaster House Constitution (Notes presented at a Social Change and Development Workshop, Harare, June 1990).
2. Brian McGarry, *ibid*.

3. Joe Slovo: *Has Socialism Failed?* (Umsebenzi Discussion Pamphlet, January 1990, p.19).
4. Joe Slovo, *ibid.*, p.18.
5. *Parade*, March 1990, p.7.

# CONSTITUTIONALISM, DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL PRACTICE IN ZIMBABWE

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Welshman Ncube

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## INTRODUCTION

The anti-colonial struggles waged by the people of Africa against oppressive colonial rule were invariably cast as struggles for freedom, equality and democracy, yet after more than two decades of independence, the people of Africa are yet to realise their dream of freedom and democracy.

Their liberators from colonial rule have subjected them to one-party dictatorships which have varied only in their degrees of repression. As a result, African political and constitutional systems are yet to develop democratic cultures founded on electoral democracy, government accountability and the rule of law. In developed countries the culture of democracy has been so entrenched that it is often taken for granted that elections will be free and fair and that those who govern will do so strictly in terms of the law and that if they do not do so they will be called to account. In Africa the scenario is often completely different. Elections, if they are held at all, are almost always characterised by all forms of intimidation and harassment of political opponents.

The ordinary people suffer the most as they are used as voting fodder in elections which are, more often than not, rigged. Where rigging fails, election results are suspended sometimes together with what remains of the country's constitution.<sup>1</sup> In some countries, basic fundamental preconditions of democracy are rejected and substituted with crude notions of 'traditional' or 'ancient' democracy which amount to a perversion of modern day democracy. The clearest example is found in Kenya, where one of the most basic principles of democracy, the secret ballot, has been rejected as alien and substituted with a crude system of balloting which involves publicly queueing behind one's candidate. This primitive "queue-behind your candidate" electoral system has been forcefully defended by the Kenyan ruling clique who have indicated their intentions to constitutionally entrench this bizarre method of "modern day" balloting.<sup>2</sup>

In Africa, the culture of democracy and government accountability is conspicuous by its absence. The continent abounds with various forms of

one-party and/or military dictatorships. Even though these regimes engage in massive acts of brutality, murder, detentions without trial and persistent violations of human rights, they still claim to be governing on behalf of, and in the interests of, the people.

Together with Botswana, Zimbabwe has often been portrayed as an exception in this gloomy picture of African politics. This portrayal of Zimbabwe is due to a number of factors which include the fact that, unlike most African former colonies which inherited independence constitutions only to reject them immediately upon gaining independence, Zimbabwe has maintained a striking fidelity to its independence constitution, amending it now and again and only in accordance with the terms provided for in the constitution. This fidelity has created what Professor Reg Austin has described as a "myth of constitutionalism".<sup>3</sup>

The vulgar anti-democratic practices and excesses that have characterised most of Africa have yet to feature in Zimbabwean politics. There have, however, been disturbing trends which have tended to suggest that sooner or later, the Zimbabwean political order might adopt "lock, stock and barrel" virtually all the repression found elsewhere in Africa.

It is the object of this chapter to discuss and highlight some of these trends with a view to demonstrating that behind the facade of "constitutionalism and democracy" which has been created by the Zimbabwean state, in fact, lies an authoritarian political and legal system, serious violations of basic democratic rights, human rights and the rule of law.

## THE RHODESIAN REPRESSIVE LEGACY

Before and during the struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe, the Rhodesian state built a brutal legal and political system — a system permeated from top to bottom with highly repressive legislation enforced and applied by a zealous judiciary. The army and police force routinely harassed, detained, tortured, and sometimes murdered political opponents of the racist Rhodesian government. The courts, acting under a pervasive array of brutal security laws, sent to jail thousands of Africans found guilty of violating the oppressive laws of Rhodesia.

The construction of a brutal legal and political system by the Rhodesian state was systematic and dictated by the ever rising tide of African resistance to colonial racist rule. Between 1933 and 1958 the Huggins and Todd governments flirted with a few security measures such as the enactment of the *Subversive Activities Act, 1950* which, *inter alia*, allowed



the government to ban all activities considered subversive. However, between 1959 and 1970 Rhodesia witnessed the introduction of much more repressive legislation such as the *Vagrancy Act, Chapter 92*, which empowered the police to arrest without warrant any person who could not show that he was employed or had adequate means of support. Thousands of people were arrested under this legislation which did nothing to stem the tide of African resistance and hence the *Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, Chapter 65*, was passed in 1960. It was intended to crush once and for all, African nationalism. Under this legislation, the most draconian in the history of the country, the police were given sweeping powers which included powers to enter and search private homes,<sup>4</sup> forbid any person from addressing any meeting,<sup>5</sup> disperse any public gathering, stop and/or impose any conditions on the holding of public processions or demonstrations.<sup>6</sup> The Ministers of Justice and Internal Affairs were given powers to ban any publications which they believed to be contrary to the public interest.<sup>7</sup>

Heavy penalties were imposed for the publication, printing, selling, distribution and/or reproduction of prohibited material.<sup>8</sup> The wearing of uniforms, displaying of placards or notices which might lead to public disorder were made criminal offences.<sup>9</sup> Heavy penalties were prescribed for people found guilty of threatening violence to others or property.<sup>10</sup> It became an offence to incite or organise a strike in an industry designated as an "essential service".<sup>11</sup> Still further it became a serious offence to do anything which might expose government officers and security personnel to contempt or ridicule.<sup>12</sup>

In 1971 the *Unlawful Organisations Act, Chapter 91*, was enacted and gave sweeping powers to the President to declare any organisation, including political parties, to be unlawful if it appeared to him that the activities of such organisations endangered public order. The Act went on to specify virtually all nationalist parties as unlawful. The authorities were given sweeping powers to declare curfews restricting the movement of people.<sup>13</sup> Taken together the *Law and Order (Maintenance) Act*, the *Vagrancy Act*, the *Unlawful Organisations Act* and the *Preservation of Constitutional Government Act, Chapter 69*, amounted to a total criminalisation of any politics that were opposed to the settler government. Indeed, the *Law and Order (Maintenance) Act* was so brutal that the then Federal Chief Justice, Robert Tredgold, resigned in protest describing the Act as a "savage, evil, mean and dirty" law.<sup>14</sup>

The circumscription of liberties provided for by this legislation was made total by the fact that the various colonial constitutions did not have a justifiable Bill of Rights. So abrogated were basic human rights that the

*Emergency Powers Act, Chapter 83*, gave the government the power to declare a state of emergency and follow it up by making regulations of any kind to deal with the perceived emergency situation. In accordance with its powers under the *Emergency Powers Act*, the Rhodesian government declared a State of Emergency in 1965 which was renewed every six months thereafter. It made various regulations among those which empowered it to indefinitely detain persons without trial. Thousands of Africans, including the majority of today's leadership, were subjected to long periods of detention.

The security agencies, such as the Police Special Branch, the Central Intelligence Organisation and the Army, acting under this array of security laws, proceeded to display "savage resourcefulness and initiative by setting up murder and sabotage squads."<sup>15</sup> Increasingly brutal and savage methods were used to suppress nationalist agitation. As the war of liberation escalated the Rhodesian security forces resorted to indiscriminate measures, particularly against the rural population. Nearly a million peasants were moved into "protected villages" the aim being to isolate the rural population from the guerrillas of the liberation war. Curfews, sometimes lasting from 6.00 p.m. to 12 noon were routinely imposed.<sup>16</sup> Brutal forms of torture were routinely used against opponents of the government. Many died under torture which included beatings, electric shocks and immersion in water until the victim lost consciousness.<sup>17</sup>

The Rhodesian state created and perpetuated an authoritarian political and legal order under which extensive repressive laws were enacted and regularly invoked by a brutal and over-zealous police force and intelligence organisation which engaged in torture and murder.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the culture of the Rhodesian legal system was one of extreme brutality in both the content and methods of law enforcement.

The inherent undemocratic and racist nature of colonisation, hinders and prevents the creation and development of democratic institutions of government. Its repressive character inhibits the development of constitutions infused with basic principles of constitutionalism and hence colonialism gives birth to undemocratic forms of government which independent governments inherit and are called upon to democratise.

With independence in 1980, it was generally expected that the new government would begin to develop a democratic political and constitutional culture imbued with basic principles of constitutionalism<sup>19</sup> and the rule of law. Such expectations were based on the fact that the

liberation struggles were fought for the establishment of constitutional democracy where government would be accountable and govern only with the will and in the interests of the people and where state power would be exercised to advance these ends.

In order to create, nurture and develop principles of constitutionalism and democracy the new government had to begin by dismantling the authoritarian and repressive security legislation and institutions of the Rhodesian state which the entire leadership had frequently condemned in the 1960s and 70s as "fascist". Indeed, the statement of declaration of policy issued on August 21, 1963 by ZANU, which became the ruling party in 1980, stated that:

ZANU shall repeal the *Unlawful Organisations Act*, the *Law and Order (Maintenance) Act*, the *Prevention of Constitutional Government Act*, the *Preventive Detention Act*, the *Curatorship Act* and all other repressive laws enacted by the white minority settler government.

The theme of a radical departure from the oppressive and repressive laws and institutions was restated in the ZANU Political Programme, No. 2 of 1973 which stated that:

Broad democratic freedoms — speech, press, assembly, association and movement — which have been taken away from the people of Zimbabwe by the settlers will be restored and guaranteed in all citizens of a free, democratic, independent and socialist Zimbabwe. All political detainees and restrictees will be released on the first possible occasion.

However, the reality has been a far cry from these declarations. Instead of a sweeping abolition of the repressive Rhodesian security laws, the independence period has witnessed an amazing continuity between the pre- and post-independence security patterns. The Rhodesian linchpin of repressive government which has the effect of criminalising ordinary politics, the *Law and Order (Maintenance) Act*, has been retained intact.

The *Emergency Powers Act* and regulations made thereunder had been similarly retained and in some cases broadened. The State of Emergency, introduced in 1965, and faithfully and ritualistically renewed every six-month period (until July 1990) permitted rule-by-executive regulation. Whatever the reason given for its almost religious renewal, thousands of Zimbabweans were detained without trial under regulations made by virtue of its existence. Numerous such detentions were based mainly on flimsy and unsubstantiated information and some were effected merely to silence the government's political critics.<sup>20</sup>

Zimbabwe has thus seen a general continuation of the Rhodesian culture of an undemocratic and repressive legal order as exemplified by the retention of such laws as the *Law and Order (Maintenance) Act* and until

July 1990, the *State of Emergency*. Virtually the same security personnel has been called upon to enforce and administer these laws

How is the retention and extensive continued use of "Rhodesian security" laws to be explained? There are various possible explanations. The first is that in conditions of poverty and unfulfilled expectations of the benefits of independence, state power inevitably becomes a "means of survival" used to create "opportunities for private accumulation".<sup>21</sup> Thus in underdeveloped economies where the national wealth is inadequate, those few that hold state power will invariably use it to entrench their positions of power in which they have "exclusive" access to the scarce resources. Accordingly, neo-colonialism inevitably breeds undemocratic and repressive political and legal orders. The ruling groups must hold the rest of society down in order for them to continue in their privileged positions.

A second possible explanation is that the repressive political and legal culture of Rhodesia was so entrenched as to acquire a momentum of its own and thereby independently impose itself upon the new leadership which had to rely heavily on Rhodesia's bureaucratic and security personnel under whose auspices the "culture of repression" originated and developed. The government's policy of reconciliation resulted in the almost total retention of "Rhodesian" police officers and intelligence personnel which had been responsible for brutal violations of human rights.<sup>22</sup> A third explanation could be that the geo-political circumstances of Southern Africa in which South Africa is engaged in destabilising its neighbours, dictate the continuation of repressive legislation and practices so as to effectively deal with the South African threat.

None of these explanations is adequate on its own nor indeed are they fully adequate even when taken together. The matter is complex and requires a careful study of the history and politics of the current political leadership in Zimbabwe which has failed to consistently demonstrate a commitment to the establishment, nurturing and broadening of democratic traditions. Indeed, the insistence of the leadership on putting on the political agenda of the country the question of introducing a one-party political system, which has been proved the world over to be a recipe for political disaster and dictatorship, confirms that the explanations for the continuation of Rhodesian repressive laws and practices are not to be sought in institutional factors or the geo-politics and security considerations of the region alone, but requires an understanding of the aims, needs and mission of the political leadership.

## THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Upon the attainment of independence the new government was faced with two immediate tasks; the dismantling of the racist and authoritarian institutions of Rhodesia including its repressive laws and legal order and the creation of a single national army out of three antagonistic armies which had fought each other during the liberation war.

We have already seen that the new rulers chose to retain virtually intact all the repressive laws of the past including the State of Emergency which has recently been lifted. We now discuss the manner and extent to which the post-independent government has used the repressive laws of 'Rhodesia' and the extent to which it has perpetuated the Rhodesian legacy of an undemocratic and brutal political tradition.

Early in 1982 after discovering extensive arms caches on properties owned or controlled by ZAPU, the ZAN-PF-led government of national reconciliation terminated its loose alliance with ZAPU and sacked all ZAPU ministers from the cabinet. Some former ZIPRA members of the newly created national army reacted by deserting from the army and starting a "dissident" war against the government which in turn responded by sending the army into the Matebeleland Province from which the dissidents operated.

It is now accepted that in its operations in Matebeleland between 1983 and 1986 the army and other security personnel committed gross violations of human rights which included "wanton killings, woundings, beatings, burnings and rapings".<sup>23</sup> The operations "degenerated into brutality and atrocity" resulting in the "maiming and death of hundreds of people who were neither dissidents nor collaborators."<sup>24</sup> According to the Report of the *Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Zimbabwe: Wages of War*<sup>25</sup> the security forces committed mass executions, kidnapped, detained and tortured hundreds of people.<sup>26</sup>

The report of the Lawyers Committee was echoed by various other human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Africa Watch.<sup>27</sup> Foreign journalists such as Peter Godwin (London Times) and Nick Worrall (The Guardian) were expelled from the country for exposing some of the killings perpetrated by the security forces. Only a few of the security personnel that perpetrated some of the killings have been brought before the courts. They include four members of the army who murdered L. E Ndlovu and his wife and two other people. In confirming the death sentence imposed on them the Supreme Court observed that the deceased were subjected to torture and then 'slaughtered' in the 'most atrocious, cruel and cold-blooded

manner'.<sup>28</sup> Also tried and convicted of murder were two members of the Special Constabulary who had murdered one Patrick Sibanda whom they suspected of collaborating with dissidents.

On the facts before the court it appeared that the murder had been authorised by the then Governor of the Midlands Province, Benson Ndemera, and the Officer-in-charge of the Police in that area, one Inspector Wurayayi.<sup>29</sup> Other cases where findings of human rights violations have been made by the courts include *S v Slatter and others*,<sup>30</sup> *Granger v Minister of State*,<sup>31</sup> *The State v Sibindi*,<sup>32</sup> *S v Makando and others*,<sup>33</sup> *Banda v Minister of Home Affairs and Others*,<sup>34</sup> and *S v R. Masikini*, in which a security officer shot a man in his custody in cold-blood and was convicted of murder.

However, virtually all the security personnel found guilty of murder and other crimes in these cases were released in June 1988 alongside other members of the security forces under a special amnesty granted by the President as part of the "reconciliation" gesture following the achievement of political unity between ZANU-PF and ZAPU.

## THE RHODESIAN LEGACY OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERROR CONTINUED

From about the beginning of 1983 the people of Matebeleland experienced once again military and political terror hardly distinguished from that inflicted on the people of Zimbabwe by the Rhodesian State. The Fifth Brigade, a unit of the national army trained by North Korean military advisers and drawing its entire membership from Shona-speaking former ZANLA combatants was deployed in Matebeleland in early 1983 and:

in the weeks that followed, the Fifth Brigade carried out many killings of villagers in Matebeleland North. Reports indicated that often they visited the villages with lists of ZAPU officials and sympathisers, who were singled out and killed. They made little attempt to engage the dissidents militarily.

In mid-1983 the Fifth Brigade was withdrawn and it was not until February, 1984 that it was redeployed, this time in Matebeleland South to deal with what the government termed "increasing infiltration" of South African-backed dissidents. This time the authorities imposed a 24 hour curfew covering most of Matebeleland South. Stores and shops were closed, traffic stopped from entering the curfew areas, villagers were restricted to within 150 feet of their homes and drought relief food supplied to the people in the affected areas was stopped. A news blackout was imposed on the operations of the army in the curfew areas. It appears that the local

population was systematically starved and that atrocities which included mass arrests, torture, rape, killings and mass detentions in make-shift detention camps were committed under the "cover" and "darkness" of the curfew. The international community condemned these actions and eventually the curfew was lifted and the Fifth Brigade withdrawn.<sup>36</sup>

During 1984 various incidents of political violence occurred in many parts of the country. In June 1984 the killing of two local ZANU-PF officials by dissidents provoked some 4 000 supporters of the ruling party to roam the streets of Kwekwe stoning and burning homes of suspected opposition supporters. In some instances, they killed their victims while the police did nothing.<sup>37</sup> In October 1984, the killing of a ruling party official and his wife in the Lower Gweru area led to the busing of hundreds of party youths into that area. They destroyed some sixty-four homes, burned several stores and vehicles and assaulted alleged ZAPU supporters and murdered others.<sup>38</sup>

In November, 1984, the murder of Moven Ndlovu, a member of the ZANU-PF Central Committee, led to yet another round of political violence in which gangs of party youths assaulted and/or killed a number of ZAPU supporters in Beitbridge. The following month political violence erupted in Plumtree where ZANU-PF youths assaulted and harassed people allegedly for failing to attend a ZANU-PF rally. The police appeared to have been instructed not to interfere in these operations.<sup>39</sup>

The period preceding the 1985 general elections witnessed further political violence. The situation became so serious that on February 16 the then Prime Minister felt obliged to intervene and chastised his Party's youth:

There appears to be some groups of youths who, contrary to party discipline, are going about harassing innocent people. I would rather have no member of the party than members who are coerced.<sup>40</sup>

Notwithstanding this intervention, political violence continued, albeit at a reduced scale.<sup>41</sup> Although the election itself was conducted in an atmosphere of relative peace, the post-election period witnessed severe political violence. In Harare, supporters of the victorious ruling party, stormed the homes of suspected ZAPU supporters, beating and evicting the occupants and destroying property while declaring the houses ZANU-PF property. Some houses were set on fire while at least six people were killed. One Simon Chauruka was gruesomely hacked to death with axes while Kenneth Mano, a then member of the ZAPU Central Committee, was stabbed.

Over three days of rioting and violence the police stood by and took no action. It was alleged that they had been instructed not to interfere. It was not until the fourth day and after government ministers had intervened

that the police started to disperse the violent crowds of party youths and women.

Post-election violence also occurred in Bindura, Kwekwe, Zhombe, Ntobe and Lower Gweru where homes and granaries were torched and scores of people assaulted.<sup>42</sup> In Kwekwe apart from terrorising their political opponents and burning their homes, a mob of supporters of the ruling party demanded that the police "surrender" to them a suspected member of ZAPU whom they proceeded to murder after the police had handed him over to them. Thus a person who had sought protection in a police station was handed over by the police, a body constitutionally mandated to protect lives, to a mob who murdered him.

During 1985 scores of people "disappeared" after being picked up by personnel allegedly driving government vehicles and they have not been heard of since. Efforts through the courts to have the government produce or admit that they were murdered by security personnel have been unsuccessful.<sup>43</sup>

The practice and perpetuation of all this political violence is important because it has demonstrated virtually the total absence of a culture of democracy embracing tolerance of opposing views as expressed through a multi-party democracy. However, what is worse is that the mass "mobs" appear to have received express and/or tacit encouragement from the political leadership. Worse still was the behaviour of law enforcement agencies who seemed disinterested in upholding the rule of law. The victims of all these acts have not been afforded the protection of the law, a right enshrined in the constitution of the country.

The current political leadership, instead of coming out in defence of democracy and attempting to broaden the theory and practice of democracy, has in fact behaved in a fashion that has tended to constrain and inhibit the emergence of a democratic culture within the country's body politic. For example, in pre-election speeches in 1985 the then Prime Minister issued a series of thinly veiled threats to those who contemplated voting for the opposition. He asked a rally in Bulawayo "where will we be tomorrow? Is it war or is it peace? Let the people of Matabeleland answer this question."<sup>44</sup>

In the 1990 election campaign the President said in Hwange:

We are saddened that there are others who want to divide us. But people must not listen to small, petty little ants which we can crush.<sup>45</sup>

Few of the persons responsible for the violence, destruction of properties, assaults and murders have been prosecuted by the authorities. The failure to punish the culprits, together with police inaction in the face of clear



violators of the law tends to demonstrate that the government has not shown itself to be committed to fully upholding the democratic foundations of the country's constitution, which enshrines multi-party democracy.

The government has also frequently resorted to the detention of its political opponents and hence has extensively used the powers of preventive detention given to it by regulations made by virtue of the now lifted State of Emergency. Hundreds of people have been routinely detained without trial under the *Emergency Powers, Law and Order (Maintenance) Regulations Statutory Instrument 435 of 1983* whose sections 21 and 53 empower police officers to detain persons whom they believe to be a risk to state security or public order for up to a maximum of 30 days. Section 17 empowers the Minister of Home Affairs to order the indefinite detention of any persons if he or she believes that the detention is "expedient in the interests of public safety or public order". In 1985 the government extensively used these powers to detain its political opponents who were members of ZAPU. Most of the ZAPU Members of Parliament were detained together with virtually all the current black members of the Bulawayo City Council, including the mayor.

Eight high-ranking national army officers who were former ZIPRA combatants were also detained joining their war-time commanders Dumiso Dabengwa and the late Lookout Masuku who had been in detention since their acquittal on treason charges in 1983.<sup>46</sup> Hundreds of other rank and file members of ZAPU were also detained and many of these appear to have been subjected to various forms of torture while they were in custody. The methods of torture have included "beating with sticks, clubs, rifle butts, raw hide whips (known as sjamboks), tire irons, fan belts and rubber hoses, often on the sole of the feet; electric shocks and perhaps most common, a form of suffocation by submerging the victim's head in a canvas sack filled with water."<sup>47</sup> The courts have made judicial findings of torture in several cases which include the case of *H. Slatter and Others, Wally Stuttford, Granger, Abenico Sbludi, Odile Harington, S. Nhari and Others* and *Joseph Makando and Others*.<sup>48</sup>

In the general election of 1985, ZAPU won all the seats in the Matabeleland Provinces notwithstanding the fact that the ruling party had used a variety of coercive tactics to have the people of Matabeleland join the ruling party. People had been harassed and forced to buy ZANU-PF membership cards. ZAPU offices were closed and the party was prohibited from holding meetings. The post-election period saw an intensification of these tactics which must have significantly contributed to the ZAPU leadership's desire to unite with ZANU-PF at any cost. The excuse used to justify the heavy

handed treatment of ZAPU and its supporters was that the party sponsored the unlawful activities of dissidents most of whom claimed to fight in the name of the party.

The majority of the above violations of human rights and the accompanying stifling of democracy were associated with the dissident problem with which the government had to grapple. Since the suppression and harassment of ZAPU was based on that party's alleged sponsorship of dissidents it was expected that the achievement of political unity between ZANU-PF and ZAPU together with the accompanying 'surrender' of all dissidents would have brought to an end political detentions, intolerance of criticism and general repressive political practices which had been perpetrated in the name of dealing with dissidence. However, this has not been so. On the contrary, political detentions, harassment of opposition parties and intolerance of criticism have continued. It is important to highlight some of the manifestations of anti-democratic practices that have characterised the post-unity period. The continuation of these practices in the post-dissident period suggests that the heavy-handed actions against ZAPU and its supporters may have been motivated, not only by a desire to wipe out banditry but also by the leadership's lack of commitment to the practice of multi-party democracy and general intolerance of criticism and opposition. In other words, the current political leadership appears to have no desire to build and consolidate a culture or tradition of democracy embracing an acceptance that no single party or group of individuals can hold a monopoly of all ideas on governance.

## THE POST-UNITY PERIOD

On December 22, 1987 the leaders of ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU signed a unity agreement under which the two political parties agreed to unite under one political party to be called ZANU-PF. Thereafter, "dissidents" who had fought in the name of PF-ZAPU were granted a political amnesty in terms of section 31(1) of the Constitution. All of them took advantage of the free pardon and reported to the police. With their surrender, peace returned to Matabeleland and the affected parts of the Midlands province.<sup>49</sup> The political "prosecution" of ZAPU and its supporters similarly came to an end as the two parties merged. A new political climate in which various sectors of society felt released from the stifling political tensions of the previous years was ushered in. The new atmosphere of freedom created new demands for the practice of democracy and allowed various sectors to demand freedom of expression and government accountability. One major

development, in this context, was radical student activism to which we now turn.

## STUDENT ACTIVISM AND THE CLOSURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

On 28 September, 1988, the students of the University of Zimbabwe and the Harare Polytechnic attempted to hold a demonstration in downtown Harare. Under the *Law and Order (Maintenance) Act* all processions and demonstrations require the permission of the police. The students' application for permission to stage a demonstration in the city condemning corruption in government was denied by the authorities who ruled that the students could only demonstrate within their campuses. The students published a document entitled *The Anti-Corruption Document* in which they declared that their demonstration was in support of the President's fight against corruption and in "uncompromising, strident and radical student tone",<sup>50</sup> they castigated alleged abuse of power and corruption in government. When the students sought to defy the ruling to demonstrate only in their campuses and attempted to march into town, the reaction of the authorities was extremely harsh. The police forcefully broke up the intended demonstration, randomly assaulting and teargassing students and their halls of residence. Scores of students were injured during the violence.

In the aftermath of the demonstration, the Minister of Home Affairs, Moven Mahachi, accused the University of being a potential source of destabilisation and claimed that the students' demonstration had been incited by subversive lecturers. The authorities followed this by a series of harsh and authoritarian acts which included detention and threats of detention against students and academics. Four lecturers, a bizarre mix of Marxists and right wingers, were dramatically arraigned before the courts after normal working hours only for the charges to be withdrawn within 48 hours. They had been charged with inciting public violence based on allegations that they were involved in organising the student demonstration. So bizarre was the mix of left and right that the authorities must have been embarrassed. However, Shadrack B. O. Gutto, an articulate Marxist Kenyan law lecturer in the Faculty of Law was arbitrarily deported on a 48-hour notice under the provisions of the *Immigration Act*, No. 18 of 1979 which allow the Minister of Home Affairs to order the deportation of a person without being obliged to give reasons thereof. This draconian law was enacted by the Smith regime during the colonial period and now represents a continuity of the Rhodesian legacy of repressive legislation which has been readily used. No official reasons were given for Gutto's

deportation although the insinuations were that he had interfered in Zimbabwe's politics through alleged involvement in the student demonstrations. Within the 48 hours, his colleagues at the Faculty of Law had to secretly drive him to the Zambian border and into Zambia as it was understood that if he attempted to leave through the national airports his temporary Zimbabwean travel document (his Kenyan passport had expired and the Kenyan authorities refused to renew it) would be seized. No airline other than Kenyan Airline would thereafter have taken him and hence he would have been effectively deported to Kenya, his country of origin, from which he is a political exile.<sup>51</sup>

In the meantime, the government summarily withdrew the grants and loans made by the state to the Students Representative Council (SRC) which had organised the anti-corruption demonstration. The then Minister of Higher Education, Dzingai Mutumbuka, publicly scolded them for "irresponsibility and indiscipline" and demanded that they publicly apologise before their grants could be restored. They eventually apologised and their grants/loans were thereafter restored.<sup>52</sup> Ironically, two months after extracting the apology from the students, Minister Dzingai Mutumbuka was being publicly castigated by the *Sandura Commission of Inquiry into the Distribution of Motor Vehicles by Willowvale Motor Industries*. He was described as "a very unsatisfactory witness. . . who was very belligerent and hostile to the Commission. . . (and who had) lied while testifying under oath. . ."<sup>53</sup>

In early August 1989, Joshua Nkomo had a chilly reception from University of Zimbabwe students on campus when he came to address them together with Fay Chung. He was not only subjected to severe questioning on a wide range of issues, but was often heckled and booed in response to some of his answers. During the stormy debate Fay Chung accused the students of being a bunch of hooligans and Joshua Nkomo lost his temper and snapped "the best thing is to close this university and ask you to re-apply."<sup>54</sup> *The Herald* took this point in its editorial of August 15, 1989 and suggested that the university be closed. As from September 29, 1988 the police had repeatedly come onto the university campus to stop planned meetings of students which were regarded as political. On September 29, 1989, they came onto the campus to stop a seminar organised by students to mark the first anniversary of their anti-corruption demonstration. They forcefully stopped the seminar and occupied the campus for the greater part of the night of September 29. On October 2 the SRC issued a statement. The statement, in an uncompromising and tough language, accused the government of violating academic freedom and the police of "harassing",

"terrorising", "clobbering" and "wantonly brutalising" students on the night of September 29, 1989. The police action was categorised as "state terrorism at its worst" and comparable to the brutal methods of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Government reaction to the statement was harsh. In the early hours of October 4, fully armed police came into campus and arrested Arthur Mutambara and his secretary-general Enoch Chikweche. The same morning as the news of the arrests spread the remaining students reacted by boycotting classes and demanding the release of their leaders. During the class boycott police came into campus and in the ensuing violence a group of students stoned and attempted to set on fire the Vice-Chancellor's government-supplied Mercedes Benz car. For several hours the police displayed severe brutality in handling the students. They teargassed residential halls, assaulted them and made a make-shift detention camp just outside the main gate of the university.

The Vice-Chancellor, after consultation with the President and other authorities decided to order the closure of the university.<sup>55</sup> The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) issued a press statement condemning the closure of the university and blaming "first — the vice-chancellor himself and his administration for not taking the necessary measures — to prevent the police from perpetrating a series of successive raids of the campus" and secondly the government for "unleashing. . . hundreds of heavily armed riot police details onto young, unarmed students".

The statement went on to observe:

the enthusiasm and zeal which the police authorities have dealt with the students is quite interesting, and is hardly demonstrated in other worthy situations, for instance in 1985 when some politically motivated thugs stoned innocent people's homes, destroying their property and even evicting them. . .

The statement concluded that the university events were "only part of the general trend of events and developments. . . (which are) a clear manifestation of rising state repression. . ."

Again government's reaction to the ZCTU statement was swift and harsh. On the morning of October 6, Morgan Tsvangirai, the ZCTU Secretary-General, experienced the 'rising state repression' when the CIO arrested him. Barefoot and handcuffed, he was taken to his office which was then searched.<sup>56</sup> He was denied access to his lawyers until October 11, 1989 when the High Court ordered the authorities to allow him such access. A few days later, after he had been given unsatisfactory reasons for his detention, the High Court ruled his continued detention unlawful and ordered his immediate release. He was nominally released only to be

re-arrested and detained almost immediately on allegations that he was a South African agent. The new detention order was ruled unlawful by the High Court which again ordered that Tsvangirai be released. The authorities "released" him only to re-detain him almost immediately. He was eventually released in November 1989 after spending over a month in detention.<sup>57</sup>

After the closure of the University the remaining 13 members of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) voluntarily handed themselves to the police, courageously maintaining that they stood by the SRC statement issued by their president on October 2, 1989.<sup>58</sup> On October 13, the High Court ruled that the detention orders of the SRC president and his secretary-general under the *Emergency Powers Regulations* were unlawful. The authorities immediately transferred them to ordinary remand prison on charges of publishing and possessing a subversive document.<sup>59</sup> The other 13 members of the SRC were also held as ordinary remand prisoners on the same charges. Upon the students applying for bail, the Minister of Home Affairs acting in terms of the *Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, Chapter 65* issued a ministerial certificate barring the granting of bail.<sup>60</sup> The students applied to the High Court to have the certificate nullified and the High Court in granting their application held, *inter alia*, that the Minister's decision to issue the certificate on the purported basis, that the granting of bail would prejudice the administration of justice in the circumstances, irrational.<sup>61</sup> The students were thereafter released from custody on bail. The university re-opened on April 23, 1990 about a month after independent Zimbabwe's second general election.

What emerges from the university saga is that the government has increasingly demonstrated its intolerance to views that contradict the official ones. The state also easily resorts to repressive and disproportionate measures in dealing with its perceived opponents. The trend towards greater intolerance and repression was vividly captured by *The Financial Gazette* of October 13, 1989 which pointed out that:

The closure of the university and the arrest of the Students Representative Council members, the arrest of ZCTU secretary-general for criticising that decision, and the detention of ZUM party officials engaged in electioneering are symptoms of a government that is unsure of itself and certainly unsure of how to cope with some pointed criticism in its policies and actions. . . . The government should allow criticism even if harshly worded, for this is the expression of democracy for which the liberation struggle was fought. . . . Repressive action is not the correct or effective answer to criticism.

## CONSTITUTIONALISM AND DEMOCRACY VS THE LEGAL ORDER

Zimbabwe became independent under a Westminster-type of constitution which was supposedly premised upon a recognition of liberal notions of constitutionalism and hence it recognised the concepts of separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, the supremacy of the legislature over the executive, civil service neutrality and government accountability. The main purpose of this constitution was to place extensive limitations on the powers of government *vis-à-vis* individual rights and sought to check the powers of the executive arm of the state by attempting to create an independent judiciary as well as a strong legislature which would be accountable.

The fundamental question is whether the underlying assumptions of the Lancaster House Constitution have taken root within Zimbabwe's body politic. In other words, has the idea of constitutionalism, as a means of regulating and limiting the exercise of political power found root in Zimbabwe's system of government? Has the Zimbabwean government encouraged respect for the rule of law by itself abusing the law and placing itself above the law?

The actions of the government as discussed above suggest that the political leadership has had problems living with notions of limited government. This has resulted in a rejection of some of the principles underpinning constitutionalism. The "power map" of the independence which created a "controlled" executive has been revised in such a way that power has been shifted in favour of the executive arm of the state. The constitutional powers vested in the Executive President by the *Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act, No. 7 of 1987*, are hardly distinguishable from those possessed by Presidents in African one-party political systems.

One of the most pervasive features of African one-party systems is the dominance of the office of the President over all other organs of state power. Elsewhere in Africa the process of achieving executive hegemony involved the constitutional "overthrow" of the legislature by the party which then asserts its superiority over all organs of the state power. Having transferred all power to the party and the President, parliaments are then retained as rubber-stamp institutions, merely for propaganda and public relations exercise.<sup>66</sup> In such countries as Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia the "overthrow" of the legislative arm of government was preceded by party claims of superiority over government. It is interesting to note that the ruling party in Zimbabwe has consistently claimed and asserted that it is supreme over government, including Parliament. Elsewhere in Africa such

claims have been a prelude to the subordination of the legislature to the party and Executive.

However, what is more important is that as the Lancaster House Constitution drew its inspiration from liberal constitutionalism, in the same breath it provided for a constitution of the repressive Rhodesian legal system with the result that from the beginning there was a clear "tension" between the constitution and the rest of the legal order. This white constitution sought to restrain and control the use of power, while the rest of the legal order offered unlimited opportunities for using repressive legislation. The result was that the last decade of Zimbabwe independence has witnessed a general trend where government has appeared to be "opting out" of the constitutional framework by invoking repressive legislation such as the *Emergency Powers Act* (now defunct) and the *Law and Order (Maintenance) Act*, all inherited from Rhodesia. In some instances members of the ruling party have even "opted out" of the repressive legal order by taking extra-legal action which has gone unpunished.

A more serious threat to democracy and constitutionalism is the expressed intention of the ruling party to move towards a one-party political system. The same old arguments used by the rest of the African leadership for introducing one-party rule are being proffered in Zimbabwe today. They were invalid then and they remain invalid today, especially after over decades of African one-party systems have clearly demonstrated the system to be nothing more than a smoke-screen behind which the ruling elites attempt to hide their oppressive and undemocratic practices. The one-party system of government turns inside out the concept of constitutionalism by rejecting the notion that the purpose of constitutions is to limit and control state power and then insisting that constitutions must facilitate the exercise of power in the service of the people.

Professor Shivji has succinctly summarised the rationalisations offered by the post-independence African leadership for abandoning liberal conceptions of constitutionalism and creating authoritarian governments when he said that the leadership argue:

that Western constitutionalism represented a foreign element which had no place in the African tradition, history or practice. Such concepts as individual rights and separation of powers — for example, separation between a president as Head of State and a prime minister as Head of Government — were incomprehensible to the African masses. In other cases, the Western multi-party system was likened to a football game, a luxury that a newly independent state could ill-afford. Party politics and electioneering were seen as a threat to national unity. In still others, Marxism-Leninism, the newly-found ideology of the state, was seen as incompatible with liberal notions of multi-party parliamentarianism and individual civil and political rights. What was important was for the state to provide for the social and



economic well-being of workers and peasants and no esoteric rights of expression and association. In all cases, a strong argument, by logic or force, was made for a strong state both to ensure and direct development. Thus erstwhile ideology of developmentalism ultimately provided the rationale for different variants of statism. Ideological differences and academic debates notwithstanding, the net outcome, as is now widely acknowledged, was the development of an authoritarian new-colonial state

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The same arguments are being put forward in Zimbabwe today and about the same results will follow if one-party rule is introduced.

## CONCLUSION

The continuation of the repressive security laws and practices of Rhodesia into Zimbabwe have been staggering. In the legal context, this has encouraged a "high level of authoritarianism and government unaccountability under the rubric 'security' and 'Emergency Powers'".<sup>68</sup> The continuation of the State of Emergency until July 1990, under whose umbrella most violations of basic elements of democracy have taken place, increasingly became difficult to justify. The almost 25 years of Emergency rule meant that virtually none of the present security officials have worked without the "comfort and reassurance of Emergency Powers alongside their truncheon or firearm."<sup>69</sup> The important point is that the same callous cruelties practised by security officials in Rhodesia can be and are still hidden behind these "trademarks of tyranny".

The challenges of democratic government require the total dismantling of Rhodesia's "trademarks of tyranny" and a concerted effort towards the creation of a culture of political tolerance. Placing the question of one-party rule on the political agenda of the country would certainly not assist towards that process. The one-party political system has demonstrated to be a recipe for dictatorship and tyranny as seen from the experience of those countries who introduced it. Why anyone could believe Zimbabwe would be an exception is mind-boggling. It is accordingly incumbent upon all democratic forces in Zimbabwe to resist all attempts towards the constitutionalisation of a one-party political system, particularly considering the fact that the political leadership which seeks to introduce it has not demonstrated itself to be imbued with principles of democratic government as we have sought to show in this chapter.

## FOOTNOTES

1. This is what Chief Leabua Jonathan did when he was Prime Minister of Lesotho in 1972.

2. For a fuller discussion of the preservation of the electoral process in Kenya, see S. B. O. Gutto, "Constitutional Law and Politics in Kenya since Independence: A Study in Class and Power in a Neo-Colonial State in Africa", *Z. L. Rev.*, Vol. 5, 1987, 142.
3. R. H. Austin, "Constitutions, Constitutionalism and Class", pp.4-6.
4. Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, Chapter 65, Section 61.
5. Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, Chapter 65, Section 13.
6. Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, Chapter 65, Sections 7 and 8.
7. Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, Chapter 65, See sections 6 and 10.
8. Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, Chapter 65, Section 19.
9. Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, Chapter 65, See section 2.
10. Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, Chapter 65, Section 30 and 38.
11. Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, Chapter 65, Section 32.
12. Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, Chapter 65, Sections 39, 40, 41, 44.
13. Unlawful Organisations Act, Chapter 91, Section 53.
14. See R. Tredgold, *The Rhodesia That Was My Life*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1968.
15. N. Bhebe, "The Nationalist Struggle, 1957-1962" in C. S. Banana (ed.) *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1990*, College Press, Harare, 1989, p.82.
16. Quoted in J. Frederickse, *None But Ourselves*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1984. For example, in 1978 that the following notice was published in respect of certain rural areas.  
As from dawn on 20 January, 1978, the following restrictions will be imposed upon all of you . . .
  1. Human curfew from last light to 12 o'clock daily.
  2. Cattle, yoked oxen, goats and sheep curfew from last light to 12 o'clock daily.
  3. No vehicles, including bicycles or buses, to run in the area.
  4. No persons will either go on or near any high ground or they will be shot.
  5. All dogs to be tied up each day or they will be shot.
  6. Cattle, sheep and goats after 12 o'clock are only to be herded by adults.
  7. No juveniles (to the age of 16 years) will be allowed out of the kraal area at any time either day or night, or they will be shot.
  8. No schools will be open.
  9. All stores and grinding mills will be closed.

17. For descriptions of some of the torture methods which were widespread in Rhodesia see Bruce More-King, *White Man, Black War*, Baobab Books, Harare, 1988. And three publications of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, namely *The Man in the Middle* (1975), *Civil War in Rhodesia* (1976) and *Rhodesia: The Propaganda War* (1977). All of these three works were published by the Catholic Institute for International Relations, London.
18. See generally, *Zimbabwe: A Break with the Past? Human Rights and Political Unity*, an *Africa Watch Report*, London, 1989.
19. For a discussion of the constituent elements of constitutionalism see B. O. Nwabueze, *Constitutionalism in the Emergent States*, C. Hurst and Co., London, 1973, pp.1-20 and 55-76.
20. See generally *Statement by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace on the Renewal of the State of Emergency*, 25th July, 1989 and *Africa Watch Report*, *op. cit.*, note 18.
21. See generally H. Okoth-Ogendo, "Constitutions without Constitutionalism: Reflections on an African Political Paradox" quoted in R. Austin, *op. cit.*, note 3, p.1
22. See generally *Africa Watch Report*, *op. cit.*, pp.8-14 and R. Weitzer "Continuities in Politics of State Security in Zimbabwe" in M. G. Schatzberg (ed.), *The Political Economy of Zimbabwe*, Praeger Publishers, N.Y. 1984 pp84.85.
23. Catholic Pastoral Statement, 29 March, 1983.
24. *Ibid.*
25. New York, 1986.
26. See pp.28-32.
27. See *Africa Watch Report*, *op. cit.*, Note 18, pp.14-20.
28. See *S. Chayana, C. Simango, G. Chiheayi and J. Gwatirera v The State*, SC 42/86, p.5.
29. See *I. Mutshunga and L. Gaba v The State*, SC 36/87.
30. HC-H315-83.
31. SC 83/84.
32. Case No. BRM 377/84.
33. Unreported.
34. HC-H-243-87.
35. *Africa Watch Report*, *op. cit.*, p.16.
36. See generally *Zimbabwe: Wages of War*, *op. cit.*, pp.135-141 and *Africa Watch Report*, *op. cit.*, pp.15-17.
37. *Wages of War*, pp.116-117.

38. See, for example, the case of *I. Mutsunga and Another v The State*, SC 36/87 in which the Supreme court found that a number of huts were set ablaze before the murder of one Patrick Sibanda by security personnel acting on the instructions of the Governor of the Province and some police officers.
39. See *Wages of War*, *op. cit.*, pp.117-120.
40. *International Herald Tribune*, March 9, 1985.
41. See *Wages of War*, *op. cit.*, pp.124-126 for details of some examples of the violence and police and/or army harassment and intimidation.
42. *Ibid.*, pp.126-132.
43. See generally *Wages of War*, *op. cit.*, pp.59-76 and *Africa Watch Report*, *op. cit.*, pp.26-30.
44. *The Herald*, June 22, 1985 and also *The Chronicle* of the same date. See also the remarks of Enos Nkala, then powerful member of government, in *The Herald*, 19 Sept., 1985 and *The Chronicle*, 23 August, 1985.
45. *The Sunday Mail*, 11 March, 1990.
46. See generally *Wages of War*, *op. cit.*, pp.69-88.
47. *Ibid.*, p.89. See also pp.90-110.
48. See generally *Africa Watch Report*, *op. cit.*, pp.43-54.
49. For a fuller discussion of the of the ZANU-ZAPU divisions, see Ncube, "The Post-Unity Period: Developments, Benefits and Problems", Note 52, *infra*.
50. R. H. F. Austin, "Neo-Colonialism, Corruption and Cressidas: The Sandura Commission of Inquiry into the Distribution of Motor Vehicles" (unpublished) p.6.
51. See generally, *Ibid.*, pp.6-7.
52. For further details of these events, see Ncube, "The Post-Unity Period: Developments, Benefits and Problems" in *Turmoil and Tenacity*", edited by C. S. Banana, *op. cit.*, at pp.324-329 and *Africa Watch Report*, *op. cit.*, pp.60-62.
53. See pp.77-78 of the Commission Report. See also R. H. F. Austin, Note 50, p.8.
54. *The Herald*, 14 August, 1989.
55. See *Parade*, November, 1989, *Moto*, October, 1989 and *The Financial Gazette*, 6 October, 1989. See generally Ncube, note 49, pp.324-328.
56. See *Africa Watch Report*, *op. cit.*, p.64.
57. See Ncube, *op. cit.*, note 53, p.327.
58. See *The Chronicle*, 13 October, 1989, for details of the statement they handed to the police upon their arrest.

59. See *The Herald*, 14 October, 1989.
60. See *The Herald*, 15 October, 1989.
61. *Mutambara & Drs vs Minister of Home Affairs*, HH-231-89.
62. See *Africa Watch Report*, pp.58-59.
63. See generally *The Herald*, 27 March, 1990.
64. See *Moto*, June, 1990.
65. *The Herald*, 16 July, 1990.
66. See generally Prait, *The Critical Phase in Tanzania*, Oxford University Press, 1978 pp.185-190 and S. B. O. Gutto, *op. cit.*, p.163.
67. I. Shivji, "State and Constitutionalism in Africa: A New Democratic Perspective" unpublished paper presented at the Conference on Comparative Constitutionalism, Harare, 1989, p.3. See also Clive Thomas, "The Rise of the Authoritarian State in Peripheral Societies", *Monthly Review*, New York, 1984.
68. R. H. F. Austin, *op. cit.*, Note 3, p.6.
69. *Ibid.*, p.7.

# CHAPTER TWELVE

## THE 1990 ZIMBABWE ELECTIONS: IMPLICATONS FOR DEMOCRACY

John Makumbe

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### INTRODUCTION

The liberation struggle preceding the attainment of national independence was, of necessity, a period of intense political activity which resulted in the raising of the political consciousness of Zimbabweans from all walks of life. The past ten years of Zimbabwe's short history as an independent nation have seen the nation transformed from a colonial, war-ravaged economy to a considerably powerful, promising nation state of international repute. The first ten years have, therefore, been years of accelerated politicisation of virtually all sectors of the population.

Since 1980, Zimbabwe has had to grapple with major issues of nation-building, particularly relating to national security, socio-economic development, ideological and political direction, and several others. These issues have necessitated the continued politicisation of all sectors of the populace. The new and second decade we have entered as an independent nation is promising to be markedly different from the eighties, particularly in terms of the level of "permissible" political activity and political development. The purpose of this chapter is to identify and discuss briefly some of the elements of the beginnings of the decade of depoliticisation in Zimbabwe, with a specific focus on the recently concluded General Elections. The paper will seek to answer the question: "Were the elections free and fair?" The paper will also seek to identify the potential implications for democracy of the events of the 1990 Presidential and General Elections.

Both the question of whether the 1990 General Elections were free and fair, and the implications for democracy need to be considered at three levels; namely, the pre-election period, the campaigning and actual voting period, and the post-election period. These three stages or levels are closely related and necessarily interdependent. With regard to the first issue, the basic premise of this paper is that the 1990 Presidential and General Elections were not free and fair. But we must first briefly define what we mean by "free and fair". Generally, a free and fair contest is one in which contestants start off from an equal position; have equal opportunities of exercising their

efforts to win the contest; face identical environmental and other constraints; and, are accorded equitable benefits and resources to enable them to participate without undue hinderance, except that stemming from their calibre, stamina or some such other characteristic beyond the control of those who manage the contest. A contestant's success or failure in the contest must, therefore, be a result of his own shortcomings rather than a result of the environmental conditions which pre-determine the outcome. Given this brief and general definition, to what extent can it be argued that the 1990 Zimbabwe Presidential and General Elections were held in a free and fair environment, i.e. under conditions of a free and fair contest?

With regard to the implications for democracy, the basic premise of this brief chapter is that events surrounding the 1990 Elections are indicative of the beginning of authoritarian rule in post-independent Zimbabwe. They are clear signs of the diminishing of democracy in Zimbabwean politics; a return to the authoritarian rule of the colonial era, but this time with a high degree of personal rule as has been the situation in several other post-colonial African states. Roger Tangri writes:

The personalistic nature of government and the concentration of power in the presidential executive are features characteristic of the political process in most African countries. Most rulers have attained a personal ascendancy over the political system and Africa has succumbed, to an important extent, to personal rule.<sup>1</sup>

## THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

A number of events occurred during this period. This chapter will, however, only deal with a few selected events.

### Corruption

The rise of corruption and self-aggrandizement among the politico-administrative leadership was well documented and exposed in the media. It culminated in the appointment, in January, 1989, of the *Commission of Inquiry into the Distribution of Motor Vehicles*, popularly known as the *Sandura Commission*. This Commission was so successful in its work that it was re-commissioned for another round of investigations into the same subject. The results of the work of this Commission include: the resignation of several politicians and top civil servants, the trial of several individuals, and the imprisonment of, at least, one former minister.

This led to the emergence of anti-corruption voices throughout society, but spearheaded by the students and a few progressive journalists. The state responded with an escalation in the use of state machinery in the form of

the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), the Police (the Riot Squad) and the now defunct *Emergency Powers Act*. As Ncube has remarked in the previous chapter, an attempt by the University of Zimbabwe students to commemorate the first anti-corruption demonstration resulted in the closure of the University in October 1989, the detention of student leaders and the detention of the Secretary-General of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), Morgan Tsvangirai.

### The Unity Accord

The Unity Accord reached between the former Patriotic Front elements of the liberation struggle period in 1987 resulted in the formation of the ruling ZANU-PF party. This was really an exercise in intra-elite cohesion<sup>2</sup> and has largely been successful in eliminating armed conflict between the supporters of the former rival parties. The formation of such new parties as the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) and the Zimbabwe Active People's Unity (ZAPU) was a direct response to the rise in corruption in government and the Unity Accord respectively. The holding of the national congress of ZANU-PF in December 1989, after the integration exercise, and the election of party office bearers at the various levels, further demonstrated that the new ruling party leadership was anxious that the exercise of democratic rights by the rank and file of the party would not seriously threaten the security of tenure of incumbent party leadership. That is why some of the top leadership of such divisions as the Women's League were appointed by the presidency.

The ruling party leadership's distrust of lower echelons of the party was also demonstrated during the party's primary elections. On several occasions, the top leadership declared elections "null and void",<sup>3</sup> especially when individuals who had been nominated by the party leadership had lost the primaries. To a considerable degree, primary elections in some constituencies were a farce.

The reason why these few events are cited here is that they have a bearing on the elections proper, and they largely paint a reasonable picture of the nature of politics at the time the 1990 Elections were held. These events may also be foretaste of what may be coming should Zimbabwe become a *de jure* one-party state. In other words, the events largely contextualise the discussion of the implications for democracy of the 1990 elections.



## CAMPAIGN AND ACTUAL VOTING PERIOD

The campaign period for the 1990 Elections will go down in the history of our nation as one of the most viciously contested period, possibly for all time, especially if the powers-that-be insist on the obsolete one-party state. The election campaign period, in my view, clearly constitutes the highest level of the politicisation of the people of Zimbabwe. It is very likely that this period will be followed immediately by active depoliticisation exercises, elements of which are already evident; e.g. the restoration of the powers of chiefs and headmen, the bureaucratisation of the political process, manifest in the creation of the Ministry of Political Affairs, the creation of a single-chamber legislature, and the exclusion of the President from Parliament. Space constraints do not permit detailed discussion of these elements in this chapter.

### **Not Free, Not Fair**

It is, however, difficult to argue that the 1990 Presidential and General Elections in Zimbabwe were free and fair, given the following brief points. The allocation of television and radio advertising time was based on the level of representation of the various parties in the Second Parliament. This was unfair since it ensured that newly formed parties could only have a maximum of four minutes while the ruling party could occupy up to thirty minutes per day. A fairer formula could have been the number of candidates fielded by each contesting party.

Still on the mass media, there was a deliberate effort to avoid advertising, whether in the newspapers or on radio and television, the rallies or any other events relating to parties other than the ruling party. This is sharply contrasted with the advertisement of the ruling party which appeared in the media, sometimes in the form of unpaid-for news items, commentaries and profiles of selected party leaders, with the relevant slant in narration and tone. Indeed, for the first few weeks of the campaign, "appropriate" summaries of the speeches of ZUM speakers were given by the news readers on ZTV while ZANU-PF speakers were fully beamed on the screens without the need for a summary by the reader. Later, however, carefully selected footage of ZUM speakers began to appear on television, and a few more stories in the newspapers.

"Star rallies", i.e. those addressed by the presidency of ZANU-PF, resulted in the commandeering of a good number of buses by ZANU-PF to ferry people out of Harare to such far-flung places as Rushinga, Chinhoyi and Marondera to boost the numbers of those attending the rally. The aim, of

course, was to give an impression of well attended rallies as a way of intimidating other contesting parties. Whether this can also be argued to have contributed to the resignations of some of the ZUM candidates and members cannot as yet be ascertained. The point to note with regard to the commandeering of buses is that it resulted in serious transport constraints for most commuters in Harare.

This may have been tactless on the part of the organisers since it may have cost them a few votes in the affected areas. Further, the fact that other contesting parties lacked the resources to hire the same buses contributes to the unfairness of the election campaign activities. It is even suspected that the ruling party may have used public rather than party funds for the hiring of the buses. It has, however, not been possible to establish the validity of these allegations.

Apart from use of hired Harare United Omnibus Company (HUOC) buses, there was also the use (or abuse) of government transport and other facilities to make the star rallies a success. At the Sakubva Stadium rally, addressed by the President, this researcher counted up to 100 government vehicles, including army vehicles and vehicles belonging to parastatals. At another star rally in Buhera North, a total of 27 buses from Harare were used to ferry people to the meeting place. Also used at this rally were several District Development Fund (DDF) vehicles for the same purpose. Thus, while ZANU-PF could commandeer all these transport resources, rival parties could not do so since they could not give orders, for example, to parastatals, to release vehicles for the transportation of their supporters to meeting places.

Finally, on the transport issue, it is known that some of the ruling party candidates were transported in Air Force helicopters and planes to rally sites. Indeed, the President himself, was able to address an average two rallies per day for eight days because of this arrangement. None of the candidates of the other parties were afforded this facility. The unfairness of the contest cannot be exaggerated, given the foregoing.

Another indication of the unfairness and lack of freedom is the violence in various areas as the youths of the contesting parties fought running battles, with the state machinery clearly supporting the ZANU-PF youths. The most gruesome of these is the Gweru incident which resulted in the shooting of the ZUM National Organising Secretary, Patrick Kombayi and the Election Director, Jerry Nyambuya, a few days before the commencement of actual voting. It is, therefore, inaccurate to say that the 1990 Presidential and General Elections were free of violence and fairly contested.

The three days of actual voting, certainly witnessed a calmness among the electorate and the general populace. Few, if any, incidents of violent rivalry were reported. On this score, the Zimbabwe people must, indeed, be congratulated. The same cannot be said, however, about the official elections machinery which made several errors including the recording of identification numbers of voters in some constituencies, the use of unsuitable containers of the ultra-violet liquid, and the unreliable voters' roll. The despatch of blank votes to Chimanimani resulted in the election there being aborted.

## ELECTION PERIOD

The nation was not surprised that ZANU-PF and President Mugabe had won the elections. That had been a foregone conclusion even before the announcing of the dates of actual voting. What, however, came as a surprise was the number of seats that ZANU-PF had won compared to the three that it lost. The campaign period had rather graphically indicated that ZUM had a considerable amount of support in some constituencies. The two seats won by ZUM were largely expected, indeed, more than the three seats were expected if the pre-election sentiments of potential voters are to be taken into consideration. The following post-electoral events further attest to the fact that the 1990 elections were not free and fair:

- the going into "hiding" of some ZUM candidates and supporters during and soon after elections for fear of victimisation;
- the mass demonstrations and threats of eviction of ZUM supporters and candidates in such places as Kwekwe with little from ZANU-PF or the government and state law enforcement agents by way of condemnation of such activities;
- the murder of, at least, three people soon after the elections, with political leaders indicating that these were politically motivated.

Be that as it may, a number of general statements need to be made with regard to the 1990 Elections. First, it must be stated, in all fairness, that the President did not merely allow his record of the past ten years to do the work for him. He actually went out of his way to actively campaign for himself and for his party. He certainly deserves credit for that. This is quite contrary to the campaign activities of some of his own followers who were getting as few as fifty or less people at their rallies.

Second, ZUM's campaign strategy was too weak or disorganised. Admittedly, ZUM had all the odds against it, but the need to fully utilise the

radio and television time cannot be over-emphasised in an election of this nature. Third, the viciousness with which ZANU-PF campaign in most constituencies indicated that, for the first time in its history, ZANU-PF was clearly terrified of losing the elections. The ZUM threat was real and ZANU-PF was aware of that and could not afford to take chances.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRACY

The first implication is that after the 1987 Unity Accord between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU, intra-elite cohesion has largely been achieved. This will tend to alienate the workers and peasants, i.e. the masses, from the political process in Zimbabwe. This is evidenced by the nomination of the top leadership of some wings of the ruling party, and the nullification of some primary elections, particularly in areas where the top leadership's nominees has lost the elections.

Further, the fact that only 54% of the registered electorate bothered to cast their vote is indicative of increasing levels of apathy among Zimbabwean voters. Eventually, participation in the political process by the masses will diminish to such levels that it will be replaced by political control as the ruling oligarchy will seek some form of legitimacy. The second implication for democracy is that there is likely to be less and less tolerance for dissent.<sup>4</sup> Most of the electioneering during the 1990 Elections was more focused on personalities and personal attacks rather than on policies and issues.

The unwarranted use of vast public resources by the ruling party for its own benefit to the exclusion of rival parties is tantamount to corruption. This tendency is likely to increase in magnitude and so erode the democratic processes of political development in Zimbabwe. The ruling party's victory in the 1990 elections is marred by these abuses, as well as by the use of violence against dissenters. The top leadership of the ruling party has not attempted to discipline some of their members who have taken to streets armed with threats, verbal abuse and placards, against members of opposition parties. In fact, one of the top leaders has recently pledged the party's support for some of the youth who have been convicted in a court of law for violent activities during the election period.

However, the level of organisation which the opposition parties demonstrated during the 1990 Elections leaves a lot to be desired. If the democratic political process is to survive in Zimbabwe, there will be need for much better organisation and mobilisation skills in the opposition parties. Opposition parties could have avoided the splitting of the dissent vote by forming a loose coalition prior to the elections. An attempt was made

by ZUM, the Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe and the new ZAPU but it did not seem to achieve much more than infuriate the ruling ZANU-PF. A weak opposition will enable the ruling party to seriously erode the democratic process since there will be no real threat to its privileged position. The implications for the rest of society can be disastrous.

Finally, ZANU-PF stated in its Unity Accord and election manifesto that they would seek to make Zimbabwe a one-party state. The election victory of this party seemed to indicate that the party was given a mandate to proceed to legislate for a one-party system of governance. The truth, however, is that the majority of Zimbabwean voters elected a party into office irrespective of its intentions and/or policies. Most African societies are single-issue voters. It would be inaccurate to assume that the overwhelming victory attained by ZANU-PF at the 1990 elections constitutes a mandate to legislate for a one-party state in Zimbabwe.

The powers-that-be, however, seem bent on creating a *de jure* one-party state for reasons which are difficult to comprehend in the light of the world-wide move from anachronistic single-party systems to the multi-party systems.<sup>5</sup> There are, however, several factors which militate against the imposition of a one-party system of governance in Zimbabwe in the foreseeable future. First, there is no unanimity on the desirability of the one-party system in the ruling party itself. There have been reports that the majority of the former PF-ZAPU elements in the ruling party are opposed to the idea of a single-party system in Zimbabwe.<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, several of the top ZANU-PF members secretly opposed the idea although they lack the courage to state their views in public, or in party meetings.<sup>7</sup> Thirdly, developments in other African countries — Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania — where the debate on the one-party state is hotting up will tend to make any reasonable Zimbabwean think carefully before embarking on the worn-out road to one-party rule. Fourthly, developments in Eastern Europe, i.e the abandonment of the one-party system, will contribute negatively to Zimbabwe's efforts at creating a one-party system.

Fifth, the fact that ZANU-PF won more than 95% of the contested seats in the 1990 elections may mean that the fear of the opposition, which normally causes African ruling parties to legislate for a one-party system, may have been lessened. Sixth, there has been considerable opposition to the one-party dictatorship in Zimbabwe, expressed through the press, seminars and pronouncements, mainly from academics, business people, workers and students. It would be unwise for the ruling party to ignore all that

opposition and proceed to legislate for a one-party system of government in Zimbabwe.

Finally, international pressure against the one-party system may dissuade the Zimbabwe Government from pursuing the issue of one-party state. Major donor countries have indicated that their preference is for multi-party democracies in the aided countries. Zimbabwe receives considerable development aid from such countries as the United States of America and the United Kingdom. It is unlikely that such aid could easily be sacrificed for the sake of holding in one's hand the proverbial absolute power.

## CONCLUSION

The 1990 Presidential and General Elections marked the end of the remnants of the colonial era in Zimbabwe. The first decade of Zimbabwe's history as a politically independent state had been a period of high levels of politicisation. This chapter argues that the second and subsequent decades of Zimbabwe's independence are likely to witness considerable levels of depoliticisation in various forms. The elections were held after misgivings had been expressed about the conduct of public and personal business by some of the national leaders.

The emergence of the voice of dissent in the Zimbabwean society culminated in the emergence of at least two new political parties which sought to replace the ruling ZANU-PF party in government. This, in turn, caused the ruling party to marshal all its efforts, legal and otherwise, to frustrate the efforts of these elements. The result is that, although it is not possible to prove that there were gross irregularities in the election process as a whole, there were aspects of the process which tended to make it an unfair contest. This chapter thus concludes that the 1990 Zimbabwean elections were not entirely free and fair.

The implications for democracy can be summed up by pointing out that the normal democratic processes are likely to be constrained considerably if the events of the 1990 elections are anything to go by. Political tolerance is fast growing thin, and efforts at instituting for dictatorial rule are evident in various forms. Popular sentiments on systems of governance seem to favour a multi-party system and are thus opposed to the one-party state. While the preference for some of the elements within the ruling party is for the latter, there is no consensus on the issue, and there is less likelihood of a legislated one-party state in Zimbabwe in the foreseeable future.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Roger Tangri, *Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa*; James Currey. London, 1985, pp.111-112.
2. *Ibid.*, p.113.
3. *The Financial Gazette*, March 2, 1990, "Comment".
4. See, for example, comments by the Senior Minister of Political Affairs, *The Herald*, 24 June, 1990; and those of the ZANU-PF Secretary for the Commissariat, *The Herald*, 4 July, 1990.
5. See Supplement to *The Financial Gazette*, March 16, 1990.
6. *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 31, No. 13, June 29, 1990.
7. *Ibid.*

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### **The One-Party State and Democracy: The Zimbabwe Debate**

The debate on whether or not to introduce a *de jure* one-party state in Zimbabwe has been a hotly contested issue since independence but especially in 1990 with the expiry of the Lancaster House Constitution whose provisions ruled out the one-party system. But the debate has gone beyond the merits and demerits of the one-party and multi-party systems. It has extended to questions on the accountability of government and party institutions, the forms and levels of popular democratic participation in those institutions and the relationship between civil society and the state.

This is, in many ways, a "home grown" debate initiated by Zimbabwean intellectuals, public figures, journalists, trade unionists and students. Their contributions are featured in this timely and convincingly argued book. Most contributions included in the book counsel against the adoption of the one-party state model arguing that it is an anachronistic and undemocratic system which restricts democratic space which it is the right of the masses to have.

#### **About the Editors**

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